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The great dilemma

Mr. Stevenson
THE

GREAT DILEMMA:

CHRIST HIS OWN WITNESS
OR HIS OWN ACCUSER.

"CHRISTUS, SI NON DEUS, NON BONUS."

BY ✓

HENRY BICKERSTETH OTTLEY, M. A.,
VICAR OF EASTBOURNE.

NEW EDITION.

REVISED FOR THE AMERICAN PRESS.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

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DEDICATED

TO

MR. W. J. RODATZ,

IN GRATEFUL APPRECIATION.

THE GREAT DILEMMA.

PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

[THIRD ENGLISH ISSUE.]

IN preparing "The Great Dilemma" for the American press the author has been unable, in the pressure of parochial work, to do more than give a very general revision to the text and notes. He has however been careful to incorporate in this edition, to the best of his ability, the chief results that have been achieved during recent years by experts in textual scholarship in regard to the authenticity of the Gospel records; so that in this all-important respect the lectures will, it is hoped, be found not to have fallen far behind the drift of contemporary criticism.

With reference to the evidential value of the argument here set forth, nothing has transpired, so far as the writer is aware, since the delivery of the lectures, to impair the logical strength of the "dilemma" maintained in the following pages; and while it is important to remember that something more than even the most cogent logic is required to give practical effect to any argument upon this unique and momentous

subject, yet there is much in the present tone of popular theological interest that seems to lend a very special value to the proof which has been here attempted, and to illustrate its great importance as indicating the line of defence to which the Christian apologist must ultimately resort.

Reference may here be permitted, by way of example, to a very suggestive, if somewhat painful, "Discussion"* of recent date, between a professed secularist and a lady who appears to hold the position of a Unitarian. The disputants start with the common denial of the divine nature of our Lord, and the question at issue is one which directly impugns the merits of his merely *human* character. The would-be defender of Christ's *human* excellence is, from the first, seen to be overweighted by her repudiation of his divine attributes, and accordingly she not only fails to vindicate his moral superiority over ordinary men, but by implication she encourages her opponent to fasten the charge of grave moral guilt upon the Christ of the Gospels. Nor

* "Was Jesus an Impostor?" A Discussion between Mr. A. B. Moss and Mrs. Wilkie. (London: Watts & Co., Fleet Street. 1885.)

is he slow to take advantage of this obvious weakness in her position, and with perfect consistency maintains, without difficulty, the following contention :

“The Gospels seem to me to be little else than a long record of the miraculous performances of Jesus. . . . If he did not perform miracles, he deceived his disciples. . . . If Jesus were in fact not God, he was the greatest impostor that ever lived. . . . If I believed in the Gospels, I could see no alternative but to accept one of the two positions named above. My opponent . . . seeks to demonstrate that Jesus never pretended to be God, and that . . . he ‘stands forth as an immortal manifestation of all the graces and virtues,’ [etc. . . .] It is against this that I protest.” (P. 39.)

“Far easier would it be to demonstrate the theory of the church, from such evidence as the Gospels supply, than to maintain the position which my fair antagonist seems to regard as invulnerable.” (*Ib.*, pp. 81, 82.)

A clearer advocacy of “The Great Dilemma” could scarcely be desired than is thus, however unconsciously, set forth in this significant “Discussion.”

The writer would take this opportunity of

expressing his grateful acknowledgments to a friend—Mr. W. J. Rodatz, of Liverpool—by whose kindly interest the lectures have been popularized in Spanish* and Italian†.

H. B. O.

EASTBOURNE VICARAGE,
March, 1892.

* In the bi-monthly "Revista Cristiana" (Madrid and Barcelona), Nos. 225-238, May to November, 1890, "El Gran Dilema," translated by Pastor Fritz Fliedner. A weekly Spanish paper, "El Heraldo," has reprinted this translation.

† Il Gran Dilemma," esposto in sei conferenze inglesi da Henry Bickersteth Ottley, Versione Italiana con aggiunte di Teofilo Gay. (Florence, Tipografia Claudiana, Via Maffia, 33. 1890.)

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE following lectures had been scarcely a week in print when they received the unexpected attention of a leading review in the columns of the "Spectator."* The points raised by the reviewer are so vitally important to the argument of "The Great Dilemma," and have been so substantially reasserted by a considerable section of its other critics, that it may not be out of place to refer briefly to them here.

I.

To the generally friendly and indeed flattering tone of much that has been said by his reviewers the writer need only allude in order to acknowledge their courtesy with gratitude. With one exception (to which reference will shortly be made) his critics appear to admit the justice of the great conclusion to which the lectures were designed as a contribution; but at the same time, with an inconsistency which seems to him quite unaccountable from the point of view they have adopted, several of them—and especially the "Spectator"—take serious excep-

* August 27, 1881.

tion to the cogency of the argument itself. The momentous subject of the lectures is not one which, in the opinion of the "Spectator," "lends itself to successful treatment" by such a process as is adopted in the following pages. .

"The dilemma into which Mr. Ottley tries to shut us up is too harsh and trenchant. . . . We wish that he had not given his case in an over-logical form, and believe that he would have strengthened his argument by moderating the trenchancy of its 'dilemmas.'" So again, an equally friendly reviewer, while "candidly admitting" that he had never seen "the alternative which constitutes the backbone of this vigorous argument" "pressed with more force or conducted with greater ability," is yet constrained to speak of what he is good enough to call elsewhere "a fine tonic and a powerful argument," as one which is "yet terrible and intolerable."

Let it be remembered that, in both of these cases, the writers distinctly avow their acceptance of the divinity of our Lord. "We are not arguing," the "Spectator" assures us, "against Mr. Ottley's conclusion, but only against the too sharp dilemma into which he tries to drive his antagonists." Now, to the mind of the present writer, all this leads irresistibly to the thought that his critics are merely evading the point at issue. They find the "trenchancy" of an argu-

ment unpalatable; they cannot deny its *truth*. But they divert their readers' attention by suggesting that there is a *third* alternative to the great dilemma. What that *tertium quid* really is, they do not attempt to say.

Yet this is surely what they are bound to do. They do not, like the single reviewer to whom reference has already been made, approach the argument of these lectures from what is really the only assailable quarter—viz., the historical credibility of the Gospel documents—but content themselves with a merely *sentimental* protest against a dilemma which is too strong to be directly denied, but which they still hold to be too “terrible” and “trenchant” to be directly asserted.

In regard, then, to any objections to the intrinsic cogency of the argument itself, the writer can only feel that his position has been immeasurably strengthened by his courteous critics themselves.

Granting that on the whole we have received a correct and reliable account of what the Founder of Christianity really did say and claim to be, the force of “The Great Dilemma” remains unimpaired by any mere emotional disparagement of its tremendous alternatives.

If Christ was verily and indeed none other but that Holy Thing which alone his followers

have held him to be for so many centuries, then it is clear that, whatever formal definition we may adopt of his true divinity—and it may perhaps be found that modern language cannot here improve upon what is truly primitive and catholic—yet certainly he must be regarded as divine in such a sense as to be “without robbery” in “making himself equal to God,” and, as such, in claiming and receiving humble adoration as God.

Thus far our critics follow us. “Certainly,” they say; “we are not arguing against the true deity of Christ.”

But here they take exception to what appears to us the inevitable complement of such an admission. They cannot bear the “intolerable” alternative adopted by those contemporaries of Christ who, fully appreciating the real magnitude of his claims, saw no escape from the dilemma in which they found themselves except to brand him, as they did, by the extremest penal stigma possible, and to execute him as a false prophet, an impostor, a blasphemer. The modern Jew is far more consistent than the modern Deist and Unitarian. He, like his forefathers, holds in execration the name of the Nazarene pseudo-Messiah. The Sanhedrin and the other Jewish leaders of our Lord’s own day were, at any rate, in the best possible position to

estimate who and what he really claimed to be. And their verdict was not for a moment doubtful. *They* at least could show no tenderness to One whom they, as jealous Monotheists, held to be the guiltiest of sinners against the majesty of Jehovah. As such—as One whose *mere humanity* (which was all they recognized) was honey-combed with the “egregious vanity” of his blasphemous pretensions—they put him to a felon’s death.

Now, in view of the fact that Christ himself never once repudiated divine honors, what position remains for us in these days to adopt?

Are we bound to be less jealous in our Monotheism than the Jews? Can we, if we deny His deity, forgive his blasphemy?

Surely the dilemma is perfectly inevitable.

If He himself, or his disciples, were merely mistaken — infatuated — deluded, nevertheless, our duty, however painful, is clear. We must renounce Him. We must do our utmost to undeceive the world, to break the idol which for eighteen centuries has been cherished by Christendom; to atone for the terrible blasphemy which his church has so long unquestionably fostered.

This duty becomes infinitely graver still, assuming, with M. Renan, the *wilful* deceit of Christ and his first followers.

In short, is it not a mere evasion of the truth at stake to imply that the Jews were wrong in executing Jesus, that Mr. F. W. Newman is wrong in finding fault with his *merely* human character, and yet that the Christian Church is still right in paying him divine honors as co-equal and co-eternal God?

Surely our critics will, upon a closer consideration of the circumstances, admit that the dilemma here set forth, however "terrible," "trenchant," or "intolerable," is yet simply *true to the facts of the case*. It should be remembered that, *whatever* view we take of Christianity, its issues are always fraught with portentous gravity; and it appears to us quite impossible, especially in days of close historical and scientific analysis like our own, to seek for a permanent resting-place upon a neutral ground of amiable hesitation such as our critics recommend. Can it, indeed, in days like these, be anything but positive cowardice or folly to suppress the plain, unvarnished, logical truth in all its naked "trenchancy," simply out of a sentimental tenderness for those whose courage may fail them when definitely confronted with the true issues of an argument so terribly powerful?

II.

Very different is the reply we have to make to the one alone of our reviewers who, as it seems to us, has discerned the really vulnerable part in the logical armor of these lectures.

"Assuming the four Gospels," writes the "Scotsman,"* "more especially the fourth, to be in all respects trustworthy records of the deeds and words of Jesus of Nazareth, it is a very simple logical problem to demonstrate that either he was a divine Person in the highest sense of the term, or that he was the greatest impostor that ever appeared among mankind.... And this," our reviewer truly discerns, "is all that Mr. Ottley has attempted to prove."

We have no exception to take to this candid statement of the Great Dilemma.

The "Scotsman," however, appears to have ignored the fact that a large proportion of the first of these lectures (§§ 10-19) is occupied with summarizing the *evidence* upon which the lecturer "assumed" the truth of the Gospels.

Our critic may rest assured that we were fully alive to the importance of this point. A very small modicum of what Mr. Matthew Arnold would call "lucidity" would suffice to show that we must establish the general credibility of

* September 9, 1881.

the Gospels as a preliminary to any inference whatever as to the Personage whose life they profess to record. In this sense it is true that the present problem may be said to belong, ultimately, to the field of critical scholarship rather than to that of abstract argument. But it was for this very reason that the writer of the following pages endeavored to bestow considerable pains upon the textual point raised by the "Scotsman." It is true, he could not hope to incorporate a Treatise on the Canon into his first lecture; but he thinks that no candid reader will hold that the "Scotsman" has dealt fairly with the author when, in the face of some ten closely printed pages of texts and notes of reference to the most recent critical researches of Europe upon the authenticity of the Gospels, his critic seeks to discredit the whole argument by an off-hand sneer at a fundamental "assumption," which the author himself was most careful *not* to make.

As regards the work itself, the lectures are substantially unchanged. The rhetorical form, whatever its disadvantages, is, for many reasons, unaltered. A few trifling modifications have been adopted in the notes, and the edition is enlarged by the introduction of a brief index.

ST. MARGARET'S, ILKLEY,
November 16, 1882.

SUMMARY.

INTRODUCTION (pp. 25-40).

THE OCCASION AND OBJECT OF THE LECTURES.

§§ 1, 2. The doctrines of Christianity are too momentous to be ignored, and exclude neutral acquiescence. They depend upon the question as to the PERSONALITY OF CHRIST.

§§ 3-6. Such is the question here attempted, with a view to the needs of "non-theological" laymen;

§§ 7-9. Whose attitude of formal assent or suspense,

§ 10. If not of positive disbelief,

§ 11. Is logically fatal to the Christian creed,

§ 12. And really implies the alternative of exterminating Christianity as a gigantic falsehood.

§ 13. Object of lectures, to elucidate this "great dilemma."

§§ 14-16. General remarks upon the functions and opportunities of the modern pulpit, in view of prevailing agnosticism and indifference.

§§ 17-20. Christianity necessitates a groundwork of knowledge as an essential factor in an intelligent faith.

§§ 21-23. This was the case in the time of its Founder, and is equally so to-day.

§ 24. Paramount magnitude of the dilemma here treated.

§ 25. Course of argument confined to the self-witness of Christ.

§ 26. Obligations of the writer.

§ 27. His reason for avoiding "theological" definitions.

Note, on the Unitarian "definitions" of Christ's nature.

LECTURE I.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF SINLESSNESS, IN WITNESS TO THE
GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 1-39).§§ 1-9. *Introductory.*

§§ 1-5. The question as to the real meaning of Christ's personal claims carries with it the whole truth or falsehood of the faith of Christendom.

§ 6. The duty of realizing this, and of treating it

§ 7. With candor,

§§ 8, 9. But with reverence and humility.

§§ 10-19. *Sources of information upon the claims of Jesus Christ.*

§ 10. Importance of testing the credibility of the Christian documents.

§ 11. Summary of results of critical investigation is all that our present purpose requires.

§§ 12, 13. Credibility of the Synoptists now generally admitted.

§ 14. The fourth Gospel: its value for ascertaining the true personality of Christ is great, but should not be overrated.

§ 15. Its historical character dogmatically asserted by Ewald,

§§ 16-19. And unanswerably vindicated by Westcott, Luthardt, C. R. Gregory, Sanday, and a weighty preponderance of English scholars, including the Bampton Lecturer for 1890, besides numerous impartial continental critics.

§§ 20-41. *The sinlessness of Christ, if admitted, logically necessitates his divinity. If denied, deposes him, fatally discredited, from the platform of even ordinary human excellence.*

§§ 20-23. Christ's own assertion of his own sinlessness impossible to sinful humanity.

§§ 24, 25. But assuming it to be untrue, he is fatally discredited as a merely human teacher.

§ 26. This is proved by his humanitarian critics, who charge him with sundry moral imperfections.

§§ 27, 28. These charges are perfectly justifiable if Christ was only man, but are frivolous when examined in the light of his divinity.

§ 29. But, unconscious of their inconsistency, his critics have confessed his general super-excellence.

§ 30. Testimony of M. Renan,

§ 31. And Mr. J. S. Mill.

§§ 32, 33. The logical outcome of such admissions makes the alternative clear ;

§ 34. For certainly Christ was neither humble,

§ 35. Nor unselfish,

§ 36. Nor in any degree truthful,

§ 37. If he was a mere man.

§ 38. And his moral sublimity, confirmed by independent witnesses,

§ 39. Indicates the dilemma in which the Jews were involved, namely, to confess his divine Messiahship (and thus admit their own mistake) ; or to put him to death as a man stained with the blemishes of falsehood, pride, and other sins.

§§ 40, 41. Which dilemma is the same for ourselves.

LECTURE II.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF TRUTH, IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 43-64).

§ 1-6. *Peculiar sanctity of truth.*

§ 1. Modern regard for truth favorable to theology.

§§ 2-4. Reverence for truth characteristic of all times,

§§ 5, 6. And a favorable starting-point in the present argument.

§§ 7-20. *Christ claims all the deepest attributes of truth, and with them claims to be divine. How can he vindicate himself in such a claim if he were an impostor?*

§ 7. Let the common view of truth be the touchstone of Christ's life and work,

§ 8. And be rigidly applied with a view to honestly abiding by the alternative thus elicited.

§§ 9-15. Christ's attitude one of consistent antagonism to all imposture, as seen both in the Synoptics by implication and by direct assertion in the fourth Gospel.

§§ 16, 17. Hence comes the inevitable dilemma of consistent truth or radical falsehood.

§ 18. The Jews, seeing this, elected to abide by the latter alternative,

§ 19. And were therefore bound to kill him.

§ 20. Can we accept their solution of the great dilemma, in the face of history and reason?

LECTURE III.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF MESSIAHSHIP, IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 67-88).

§§ 1-8. *Recapitulation.*

§§ 1, 2. Christ's claim of sinlessness, though undisputed,

§ 3. Was fatal to his earthly success,

§§ 4-6. And issued in his condemnation

§§ 7, 8. And in their rejection of his claim to be the Truth.

§§ 9-31. *Further, claiming to be the Messiah, he asserted that he fulfilled and superseded the Mosaic Law. This implied his divine dignity or his blasphemy.*

§§ 9-11. The circumstances in which the phenomenon of a sinless life appeared

§§ 12, 13. Indicated the fulfilment of the Mosaic dispensation.

§§ 14-16. Judaism in fact prepared the ground for Christianity.

§§ 17-19. And the Jewish law was, according to Christ, accomplished in himself.

§ 20. His attitude towards the Law,

§ 21. As, *e. g.*, in regard to the Sabbath,

§§ 22-24. Is one of consistent superiority.

§§ 25, 26. Indeed he distinctly claims to be the very fulfillment of all the Old Testament Scriptures.

§ 27. This was recognized by the Jews, who thought him guilty of blasphemous innovations.

§§ 28-30. Which suggests the same dilemma as before,

§ 31. Namely, adoration of his divinity, or indignant rejection of his moral superiority.

LECTURE IV.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF DIVINE ROYALTY, IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 91-115).

§§ 1-28. *In asserting himself to be the Founder, Legislator, and Judge of the "Kingdom of God," our Lord Jesus Christ really claims to be God of all the earth.*

§ 1. The mystery of Christ's personality, openly confessed by critics of every school,

§ 2. Is now wrested into an excuse for rejecting Christianity.

§§ 3-5. The "Kingdom of God" as taught by Christ was not a mere metaphor.

§ 6. It is the keynote to his ministry;

§§ 7-10. And the Jews, taught by their own history and literature, recognized its true import.

§ 11. A similar expectation prevailed in the Gentile world.

§ 12. In reviving this general expectation and centralizing it in himself,

§§ 13, 14. Christ claims to be the Incarnation of the JEHOVAH of the Theocracy, and to restore the spiritual kingdom of ancient Israel.

§§ 15-17. The Jews expected a temporal royalty and were baffled and angered at being disappointed.

§ 18. We can see the true bearing of his claim, which was to be

§§ 19-22. The Founder, King, and Judge in the universal Kingdom of Almighty God.

§ 23. His lineage illustrates the same truth.

§§ 24-27. The Jews were staggered at such awful claims; and, in their bewilderment and horror, executed him as a political traitor and would-be usurper,

§ 28. And thereby installed him in an everlasting throne.

LECTURE V.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF SUPERNATURAL POWER AND AUTHORITY, IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 119-153).

§§ 1-34. *In claiming to work miracles, our Lord Jesus Christ fulfils the anticipations suggested by the other circumstances of his life, and confirms the truth of his divinity.*

§§ 1, 2. The personality of Christ is absolutely unique in history, and is enveloped in a supernaturalism which criticism at once dispels in the case of any human teachers.

§§ 3-6. His previous claims must have suggested supernatural surroundings.

§§ 7, 8. This *a priori* expectation is entirely confirmed by the facts of subsequent history, which indicate the occurrence of some unparalleled event at the particular crisis of our Lord's life.

§ 9. All this falls in with the fact of Christ's claim to work miracles,

§§ 10, 11. As to which claim there is no room for doubt.

§§ 12-15. The *a priori* credibility of miracles is admitted by thoughtful skeptics, and depends on the previous assumption of the personal existence of God.

§§ 16-18. The cogency of the evidences for miracles has commended itself to the greatest minds of modern Europe, and this should teach the duty of modesty to those who fail to acknowledge their credibility.

§§ 19-23. To realize the true miracles of the physical universe is the first step to a proper understanding of the miracles of the Bible. Science here renders invaluable service to theology.

§§ 24-26. The life of Christ intimately bound up with the supernatural. To attempt to eliminate miracles and to leave the historical Christ is impossible.

§ 27. Was Christ a mere trickster?

§ 28. Miracles, the essential "signs" of a supernatural Presence, the necessary accompaniments (to speak reverently) of a divine Incarnation.

§ 29. Miracles either disowned by other teachers, or never really fastened upon them so as to be irremovable by critical inquiry.

§ 30. Christ's miracles undisputed by his contemporaries,

§ 31. Who attributed them to sorcery.

§§ 32-34. Which solution again introduces us to the alternatives of the great dilemma before us.

LECTURE VI.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF CO-EQUAL GODHEAD WITH HIS FATHER,
IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA (pp. 157-186).

§§ 1-22. *By the entire posture, moral and intellectual, of his life, Christ reveals his claim to be a divine Being.*

§§ 1-6. The explicit assertion by Christ of his own divinity is not "logically" required for the argument, for the fact itself is implied by each of the preceding claims.

§ 7. Mr. J. S. Mill's assertion that our Lord never claimed divinity

§§ 8, 9. Is proved to be false, unless we reject the testimony of the Synoptists (by whom his divine claims are implicitly recorded),

§ 10. As well as the direct avowals made in the fourth Gospel.

§§ 11-13. John's evidence is unanswerable, in its three-fold testimony to our Lord's (*a*) co-equality, and (*b*) essential unity with the Father, and (*c*) his pre-existence.

§ 14. At any rate his claim was recognized, in all its momentous bearings, by his contemporaries, even if not by Mr. Mill,

§ 15. Or by Mr. Matthew Arnold.

§ 16. The "catholic" view alone satisfies all the facts of history.

§ 17. And may, in fact, be formulated as a logical inference.

§§ 18-22. The escape from the great dilemma by any theory of "deification by the enthusiasm of Christ's disciples" is hopeless. Such theories are wholly inadequate to bear the strain of historical criticism.

§§ 23, 24. Conclusion.

INTRODUCTION.



“I AM ONE THAT BEAR WITNESS OF MYSELF.”
John 8 : 18.

"No one to-day disputes that he (Jesus Christ) was truly man. Is it true that he was very God? It is either true or false. As to the fact, there are only two alternatives. And between the two the gulf is impassable. If it is not false, it is true. If it is not absolutely true, it is absolutely false."—ILLINGWORTH, "Lux Mundi."

"The debate as to the truth of Christianity has at last narrowed itself into one as to the personality of its Founder."—STRAUSS.

"The call to decide between these two positions, either that Jesus is what the Church universal teaches, or else an impostor and the greatest teacher of idolatry the world has ever known, is thus once again presented to the mind of Christendom. For this is the question, and nothing less. It is idle for M. Renan and his supporters to say, 'You misunderstand us: we do not intend to charge him with anything so grave as imposture: the East has measures of sincerity differing from ours,' and the like. Such excuses are of no avail. He who permits others to believe and teach that he has wrought a marvel which he knows he has not wrought is an impostor."—CAZENOVE.

"The choice lies between two alternatives. Cease to revere Jesus or consent to adore Christ."—CHADWICK.

"Strauss laughs at Paulus, Baur at Strauss, Renan at Baur, the hour-glass at all."—COOK (Boston Lectures).

"The witness which Christ offers of himself either proves everything or it proves nothing."—MANSEL.

"The energies of all parties engaged in this conflict are gathered ever more and more around the person of Christ as the central point at which the matter must be determined."—DORNER.

"Those who deny our Lord's divinity, and yet set him forth as the best specimen of our race, . . . are in an inextricable dilemma. If he is not God, there is a deadly flaw in his character."—Canon M. MACCOLL.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE following extract * from a notice which preceded the delivery of these lectures will sufficiently indicate their general purport :

“The central event of the Christian Passion-tide † is one which no intelligent person, of whatever creed, can affect to disregard. To view the facts—or even the alleged facts—of a divine Incarnation and a divine Atonement with indifference, argues, not irreligion, not impiety, but sheer intellectual defect. ‡

2. “But between indifference or even posi-

* For the sake of clearness an occasional phrase has been altered in this extract.

† The lectures were delivered during Lent, 1881.

‡ “Not to be interested in the life of Jesus Christ : . . is to be insensible to the nature and claims of the most powerful force that has ever moulded the thought and swayed the destiny of civilized man. To feel this interest . . . a man need not even profess to be a Christian. He may, indeed, be earnestly opposed to Christianity, and his opposition can scarcely be formidable unless he has given his mind to the careful study of that which he opposes. To such men as Celsus or Lucian or Porphyry or the apostate Emperor Julian or the philosopher of Ferney, Christianity was a matter of the deepest intellectual interest. Men do not write like Celsus or act like Julian or epigrammatize with the bitterness of Voltaire, about a doctrine in which they feel little concerned.”—LIDDON, “Some Elements of Religion,” p. 212, sqq.

tive skepticism on such subjects, and sincere adoration of the unique Personage who lends them all their interest, there is to-day a neutral ground of half belief which affords a precarious footing to many. Not consciously to reject the claims of the Founder of Christianity does not by any means imply the deliberate acceptance of them in all their momentous bearings upon our practical life. Between a formal and unintelligent acquiescence in what we 'believe' and a living enthusiasm for its truth there is indeed a vital distinction.

" 'What think *ye* of Christ?' 'Whom say *ye* that I am?' These are, after all, the great questions that are suggested by the tragedy of Calvary.

"To elucidate the great dilemma which any answer to these questions must imply; to clear away some of the intervening mists which, from long familiarity or from historical remoteness, envelop the Gospel histories and obscure or distort the sacred person of the Christ; to concentrate the whole faculties of the historical student upon the tremendous fact of His divinity, . . . this is the first object of the present endeavor."

3. Now it will be seen at once that such an object as this is in itself far too ambitious for satisfactory treatment in a series of six ordinary

addresses to a mixed and popular audience. Of this fact, and of his own very meagre treatment of the great dilemma with which he had to deal, no one can be more profoundly sensible than the writer himself. Further, the lectures, even as lectures, were not written with any view to publication, and by special request they are here presented to the reader in the rhetorical form, and almost in the identical language, of their original delivery. They would certainly have never seen the light but for the direct wish of some whose kind desire it would have been affectation, not humility, to set aside.

4. It is, then, with great diffidence that these lectures are now submitted to a severer and therefore less partial criticism than that which has thus encouraged their publication. But the writer cannot refrain from hoping that the grounds upon which their *viva voce* delivery was found acceptable may to some extent justify their appearance in a less ephemeral form.

5. The lectures themselves were intended to meet the wants of many whose busy commercial and professional lives entirely prevent anything like a close or critical investigation of the claims of Christianity upon educated—but not “theologically” educated—minds. They were undertaken in the conviction that the pulpit may and ought to supply the especial needs of such a

class. The writer himself held the belief—which he thinks no one who is familiar with the temper of modern life will assert to be wholly groundless—that among the rank and file of ordinary Englishmen there is no inconsiderable number of persons who, without being philosophical agnostics, are yet quite devoid of any definite views about Christianity.

6. They have heard quite enough about “the undermining of ancient beliefs,” “the rapidly accelerating decay of the older ideals,”* “the removal of obsolete landmarks,” “the continuity of natural law,” “the questionable authenticity” of the fourth Gospel or of the Pentateuch, “the scientific difficulties” of miracles or the impossibility of revelation, “the reconciliation of faith and reason,” and so forth, to be well aware that their lot has fallen upon stormy times so far as “the old creeds” are concerned. Not quite knowing what may be the real meaning of all that is going on around them, they look about for shelter like those who feel “there is thunder in the air.” But circumstances are still unkind to them. Whichever way they look they see there is a strait and narrow path, beset with thorns, in front of them. They see that each of the shibboleths they would fain pronounce involves hard words before and after it.

* “Modern Thought Magazine,” April, 1881, p. 90.

And thus they elect to remain *in statu quo* till the tyranny of circumstances be overpast.

7. What this practically means, as regarding the religious attitude of what the writer believes to be a not insignificant proportion of fairly educated Englishmen, may be seen by a moment's consideration of the facts before us.

8. With some their religious creed is a highly strained posture of verbal assent to certain venerable formulas, by which they hope to fulfil the conditions of church membership. Ask them to explain their real opinions in regard to the Founder of Christianity, and they will either reply in the set phrases of the creeds, or they will admit, if quite honest, that they have, in reality, no definite conviction as to who and what Jesus Christ was or was not. Any conception of Christianity as a matter of historical truth; any vital apprehension of the creeds as reliable statements of facts that have actually transpired or will hereafter actually transpire; any adequate view of the "doctrine" that, at a certain ascertainable date, in a certain geographical locality, the Almighty God of all the earth became a man, in human shape; that, in the history of that singular nation whose representatives are found in every country, the Jews, God has broken the otherwise eternal silence of his dealings with the human race;

that the Messiah whom the Jews executed was very and eternal God—this, every word of which is distinctly stated in the creed of Christendom, has too often become a mere religious parlance, a usage of men's lips, anything and everything except what it certainly must be, viz., either by far the most stupendous fact of all human history or by far the most mischievous and daring blasphemy which incarnate falsehood could conceive.

9. Again, instances are never far to seek of men who do not, indeed, explicitly reject the divine claims of Christ, but neither do they consciously accept them. They are familiarized by long usage with Scriptural and so-called "religious" phraseology, and they view the creeds of Christendom as mere counters, devoid of any genuine value in the business of life. The gospel teaching is practically little more to them than an allegory or parable, a speech in an unknown tongue, a matter hopelessly vague and emotional.

10. Others, too, there are who, when confronted with the common-sense statement of the tremendous doctrine of the Incarnation, cannot, dare not, accept that doctrine as a fact.*

Out of pure reverence (they will tell you) for the omnipotence of God, they scruple to accept

* The writer would in deep humility commend to his lay readers the following words of a living layman in view

the Incarnation as indeed historical because it appears, in their eyes, to be a dishonorable limitation of that omnipotence.

11. Now nothing could be further from the intention of the writer than to lessen that reverence. But it was his desire to respectfully urge such persons to pursue the matter to its logical and proper end.

To them—though they had hitherto shrunk from putting their opinions to the test like this—the Christ of their faith is the Christ of Renan or of Strauss, a mythical Son of God, certainly not the Christ of the apostolic church, certainly not the Christ of history.

of the necessity for dispelling a certain atmosphere of clerical prejudice which is supposed to pervade the reasoning faculties of any but so-called "freethinkers." "And now," writes Mr. R. H. Hutton, "let me ask myself, and answer the question as truly as I can, whether this stupendous fact of the Incarnation is honestly believable by any ordinary man of modern times who has not been educated into it, but educated to distrust it; who has no leaning to the 'orthodox' creed as such, but has very generally preferred to associate with heretics; who is quite alive to the force of the scientific and literary skepticisms of his day; who has no antiquarian tastes, no predilection for the venerable past; who does not regard this truth as part of a great system, dogmatic or ecclesiastical, but merely for itself; who is, in a word, simply anxious to take hold, if he so may, of any divine hand stretched out to help him through the excitements and the languor, the joy, the sorrow, the storm and sunshine, of this unintelligible life? From my heart I answer, Yes," etc.—*"Theological Essays,"* 2nd edit., I. 259, sqq.

12. Little dreaming of the terrible dilemma of such a faith as that;* little guessing that, if He be not very and eternal God, Christ was that which Christian lips dare hardly frame; little dreaming that, if he be not the eternal God, "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead," he deserved the criminal's and blasphemer's death which the Jews inflicted on him; little enough realizing that, from this point of view, he never rose from the dead, and that, consequently, the preaching of the early apostles, the persecutions of primitive Christendom, the

* "In turning aside from the volumes of Strauss, we cannot too earnestly beg of any doubting mind that it would ponder well the dilemma placed before us in this extraordinary work. That dilemma, as conceived by Strauss, may, we believe, be stated with perfect fairness as follows: Either my mythical theory is true, or else the orthodox Christology is true. There is no middle course. . . . Modern attempts to stop short of the mythical theory, and yet to hold less than the early church, have not proved at all more successful than those of the early heretics. Socinians or rationalists, like Henke, who remove the person and work of Jesus from the essence of religion; Schleiermacher with his eclectic Christology; Kant and De Wette with their symbolical interpretations; Schelling with his speculative doctrine of an Incarnation; . . . these theories are each in turn brought forward, tried, and rejected." This position really involves that which is "the final and solemn dilemma just stated."—DR. CAZENOVE, "Christian Remembrancer" (Review of Renan), July, 1864, p. 208. See Archbishop Tait's Visitation Charge, 1880 (The Church of the Future), p. 77. "We must drive our antagonists to the . . . dilemma, 'Do you hold Him to have been impostor or wild enthusiast?'"

gradual progress of the Christian faith, are phenomena that are simply built upon a gigantic lie propagated in the name of God ; little realizing that, unless Christ be indeed divine, this world is robbed of every true and lasting joy, and becomes to the thoughtful mind little better than an asylum of men and women whom life itself has betrayed into a hopeless delusion ; not realizing this, they seek in a mutilated Bible and a fragmentary Gospel—and even that fragment a tissue of mingled fraud and folly—they seek in the falsehood of a merely human Christ a refuge from the truth of the eternal God because it involves such unspeakably awful consequences. Venturing, under the plea of reverence, to tamper with the eternal purposes of the living God who made them, trifling with the awfulness of sin in his eyes, criticising his wisdom, darkening his counsels in their limited guesswork as to the origin of evil or the responsibility of our free will, they are staggered at the terrible vision of a God in pain of death, and—though all unconsciously—join in the ribald challenge of the bystanders on Golgotha, “ If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

13. It was, in fact, in view of this momentous alternative, it was in the desire of exposing the logical issues of an “ undogmatic ” faith, it was in order to reduce to a minimum the logical

standing-ground of any who affect a neutral attitude with regard to the creed of Christendom, that these lectures were originally undertaken.

14. And here the writer may perhaps be permitted to give expression to his own very deep conviction of the importance of the pulpit as a means of diffusing definite and substantial truth, in contrast with that merely subjective pietism which frequently monopolizes the attention of both preacher and congregation.

15. It must be remembered that almost the only distinctive corrective which is administered to popular agnosticism or indifferentism is the weekly sermon. For, as has been implied already, it is to be feared that the proportion of *students* of theological literature is a mere fraction of the "religious" public.

16. Now, from whatever cause, the antidote of the pulpit is scarcely so effective as might be expected. We are not likely to be allowed to forget that, unless statistics are unusually misleading, the *male* attendances at church and chapel are—with some notable exceptions—wholly inconsiderable; and further, that there are masses of persons who never "sit under" any exponent of the gospel whatever.

17. Can there, then, be any truth in the trite complaint that Christianity is proved thus to have lost its early strength?

That *this* solution of the difficulty will not meet the facts of the case might again be easily proved by the statistics of many congregations.

18. Are we, then, to conclude that it is the sole fault of the pulpit itself when the congregations are attenuated or feminine? If the ideal which is put in front of the men be dwarfed and stunted, it must fail to commend itself to the masculine attention. The inference is wholly groundless that the truth itself must be at fault, because, if it be not presented in its objective grandeur, it appears often devoid of sinew, colorless, invertebrate. For, assuredly, mere sentiment must needs be sorry food for a robust Christianity. In days of close historical analysis like our own, a man's spiritual fibre will be withered, his soul will die of inanition, if emotion be its only nurse, pietism its only nourishment. Or, at best, if his faith survives the shock of circumstances at all, it will be but a poor starveling babe. His body will not thrive without healthy meat and drink, nor will his spiritual manhood sustain its vigor without substantial food.

19. No "sweet Galilean vision" will suffice to brace men for the solemnities of life. The needs of humanity are not to be sated with æsthetic rapture or with pseudo-religious ecstasy. Its hunger is not appeased by dreams of bread, nor its thirst quenched by the vision of

water that it cannot drink. And yet, unless the foregoing observations are wholly groundless, it will be admitted that there is among us a religious limbo—a chasm of vaporous unreality—to which the whole fabric of our so-called faith is not unfrequently consigned.

20. Now, one very obvious though largely forgotten explanation of this is the fact that faith, to deserve the name, is absolutely impossible without adequate and reliable *information* as to the Object of faith.*

21. This is surely clear enough from the lives of the earliest “Christians” themselves. Their “faith” was simply the result of ordinary experience. They did not, in the first instance, require the assistance of definitions enshrining the facts of that experience. They were *witnesses*—*μάρτυρες*—not apologists.† They simply announced in word and deed a certain objective phenomenon which had presented itself to the evidence of

* Faith is thus described in Blunt’s “Theological Dictionary” (2nd edit., 1872, p. 267): “It is, partly of the understanding and partly of the will. As far as it is of the understanding it is (1) the knowledge of its object . . . and (2) a rational conviction as to the competency of the authority.”

† Prof. Plumptre points out in this connection that “the word *μαρτυρία* and its cognates occur in the New Testament a hundred and fifty-two times. Of these thirty-one are found in our Lord’s recorded teaching, and fifty-eight in the language of St. John.” (Boyle Lectures, “Christ and Christendom,” p. 216).

their senses; and they found it impossible to avoid announcing their conviction of its truth at all risk and cost.

22. And so it is in our own age. Without a definite substratum of intellectual conviction faith must languish into sentiment, Christianity must be caricatured into a morbid and unwholesome romance.

23. It is for lack of *knowledge* that Christians become formalists and that their Christianity is deprived of its pristine vigor: it is for lack of clear and definite apprehension of *history* that it loses its true outline of objective fact and becomes enveloped in the mists begotten of long familiarity and historical remoteness. And thus it happens that a code of mechanical observances and a vain repetition of formulas is substituted for the faith which is based upon adequate information; the elements of a living enthusiasm are thus fused into an *olla podrida* of sentimentalities, and a rational and intelligent conviction is undermined by Ignorance and its attendant Superstition.

24. If it be indeed the duty of Christians to be able to give to every one who asks a reason for their faith, the urgent importance of the dilemma here imperfectly depicted will be obvious to all. And to all students of modern sociology it is surely of the first importance to have a clear

and intelligent view upon the subject of the Personality of the Founder of Christendom.* Indeed, the writer will not disguise his own deep conviction that it is in proportion to the tenacity with which the divinity of Christ is grasped that Christianity becomes ethically powerful or the reverse.

25. It need hardly be pointed out that the argument is advisedly confined in the ensuing pages to the one line of evidence which is supplied by the witness of Christ himself. The general scope of the lectures must, of course, be familiar to many readers; and, except in the particular treatment adopted, they can make no pretence to originality.†

26. For many valuable suggestions the writer is directly indebted to the Rev. Canon Liddon—especially to the fourth of his “Bampton Lec-

* “When we consider the way in which Christianity grew up, it is plain that it could have had no place nor significance in history but for the Person of its Founder.”—F. C. Baur, “Church History,” chap. 1, p. 38.

† See, for instance, Archbishop Whately’s lectures on “The Kingdom of Christ,” esp., Essay 1, on Christ’s own Account of his Person. I am indebted to the Rev. Prof. Westcott for his recommendation of the work of W. F. Gess, as in part at least covering the same ground as these lectures. It is entitled “Christi Person und Wirk nach Christi Selbstzeugniss und den Zeugnissen der Apostel.” Basel, 1870. American translation by J. A. Reubelt, “The Scripture Doctrine of the Person of Christ.” Andover, 1870.

Dr. Chadwick’s Donnellan Lectures for 1878-79, entitled

tures." And he is further bound to express his grateful and frequent obligations to many other works to which reference is made throughout the text.

27. In conclusion, he would again dwell with some emphasis upon the reason why little or no reference is made to any of the great theological definitions which are, of course, wrapped up in the substance of this argument. He was speaking in the first instance to laymen, who cannot, as a rule, be supposed to take any very enthusiastic interest in the precise relationships between Arianism and Sabellianism or in the formulas of the Homousion and the Hypostatic Union. The writer trusts, indeed, that no chance phrase of his may be found at variance with the church's own spirit in view of such matters as these; but the lectures were intended, first and foremost, for "the rank and file" of Christians; and this intention would have been defeated if he had permitted the following pages to become a compendium of theological controversy, even for the sake of escaping (if so it must be) the occasional imputation of *formal* inaccuracy of language.

"Christ Bearing Witness to Himself," are an able exposition of the argument derived from the self-manifestation of Christ, and a course of sermons dealing with the same argument has been recently preached by the Rev. C. J. Ridgeway. ("Is not this the Christ?" Skeffington, 1889.)

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE writer is anxious to bespeak the kind attention of Unitarian readers to an admission which he feels may well be expected by them, and as to which he certainly regrets that it did not occupy a prominent place in the First Edition.

He cannot but be sensible of the many noble lives which the Unitarian view of Christ has produced; and he desires, in sincere reverence for such lives, to suggest one very important point, which is this. May it not be possible, after all, that the conscientious Unitarian really *worships* our blessed Lord, albeit he guards himself from what he thinks is Tri-theism by rejecting what *he holds to be* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity? In other words, is there not, at the root of his difference from the Christian Creed, a vast and portentous difficulty of *definition*? When he says, "I cannot believe that Christ was God," *what does he mean?** by that solemn

* Compare the well-known passage in Rev. F. W. Robertson's Life upon the gradual steps by which humanitarian admiration of Christ loses itself in adoration: "For what is it to adore Christ? To call him God; to say, Lord, Lord? No. Adoration is the mightiest love the soul can give, call it by what name you will. Many a Unitarian, as Channing, has adored, calling it only admiration," etc., ("Life and Letters," vol. II., pp. 162, 163).

and awful name of "God"? Is it not possible that a closer knowledge of the Trinitarian confession would remove his scruples on this point, by showing him that the Christian, who worships Christ, is at least as jealous for the Unity of the Godhead as himself? and that what he probably means by his "Unitarianism" is, that he jealously holds to that clause of the Athanasian Creed in which Christians confess that their Lord and Saviour Christ is "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead," indeed, though never denying, as Unitarians themselves assert, that He is "inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood"?

I.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO BE FREE FROM SIN,
AND IS CONDEMNED AS A CRIMINAL.

“WHICH OF YOU CONVINCETH ME OF SIN?”—
JOHN 8:46.

“IF HE WERE NOT A MALEFACTOR WE WOULD
NOT HAVE DELIVERED HIM UP UNTO THEE.”—
JOHN 18:30.

"Between the adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ as God and the rejection of him altogether there is no reasonable standing-ground."—LIDDON (Bampton Lectures, Intro. to 14th ed., 1890, p. 24).

"Jésus ne doit pas être jugé sur la règle de nos petites convenances. . . . La position qu'il s'attribuait était celle d'un Être surhumain, et il voulait qu'on le regardât comme ayant avec Dieu un rapport plus élevé que celui des autres hommes."—RENAN.

"Unless man's free susceptibility of sinlessness is somewhere filled in the history of the race, God's ideal as to man as a type fails of realization. But God's ideal and promise never fail. Therefore the most perfect possible type of man will be brought into existence; that is, somewhere in history a sinless character will appear."—JOSEPH COOK (Boston Lectures).

"The same Jesus, then, who makes upon us such an impression of perfect candor and gentleness, meekness and humility, wisdom and holiness; . . . this same Jesus has claimed divine majesty, divine power, nay, divine nature: and were all these claims indeed false? Was he either a crazy enthusiast or a blasphemous liar? Could such impious deceit as this proceed from the lips of him who did no sin? This is the problem."—RIGGENBACH.

"How, then, can one and the same character be at once the very best and the very worst? The contradiction is as monstrous as that white is black and black is white."—P. SCHAFF.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF SINLESSNESS IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA.

1. It does not require any profound theological insight to recognize the true issues which the personal claims of Christ involve. What those issues really are must be obvious from the most casual survey of the case upon which, by common consent, we are asked to pronounce.*

Rightly or wrongly, Christendom is founded on the belief that Jesus Christ not only advanced divine pretensions, but was actually justified in advancing them. In other words, by far the most influential populations of the civilized world have for eighteen centuries accepted ✓ the deity of Christ as a fact.†

What is the true explanation of this phenomenon?

2. This is the question upon which we are about to enter. It is not *impossible*, of course, that the whole gigantic superstructure of our

* "The debate as to the truth of Christianity has at last narrowed itself into one as to the Personality of its Founder."—Strauss, "The Old Faith and The New" (trans.), p. 53.

† For an eloquent exposition of the argument here set forth, see Schaff's "Christ and Christianity: Christ His Own Best Witness."—Nisbet, 1885, pp. 23-44.

modern life has been reared upon a delusion. But candor surely requires the admission that such an explanation of Christianity is not in itself very probable.

3. But in any case the issues are sufficiently portentous. No one, at any rate in such an auditory as this, will be guilty of regarding them as a matter upon which he can afford to plead indifference.

4. If the claims of Christ—such as they are popularly held to be—were after all unjustifiable, then either Christ himself was mistaken or Christendom has been deluded. In either case, the alternative lays the seeker after truth under the most solemn obligations.

(a.) *If Christ was mistaken*, his mistake arose either consciously or unwittingly. If he was consciously mistaken, he was without doubt an impostor of an appalling type. If he was unwittingly in error, he most certainly is utterly unworthy of admiration as a leader of men, and must be set down as the victim of a delusion than which the imagination would fail to conceive of any more portentous in its magnitude or more mischievous and fatal in its consequences.

(b.) *If Christendom itself has been deluded*—that is, if, beginning with the belief of the apostles, the verdict of Christendom has credited Christ with pretensions which he never assumed—then

of course it is clear that Christendom is built upon what is not the less a lie because it was merely an *unconscious* lie.*

5. Under either of these two suppositions the duty of all honest men in our day is sufficiently plain, however painful.

If the claims of Christ were the claims of either an impostor or a fanatic; or, again, if the witness of the apostles be, either intentionally

* It may be convenient here to indicate the line of argument which is usually taken up by those who seek to escape from "the great dilemma" here depicted by asserting that there is a third alternative, which is, that though Christ was not divine, he was wholly admirable, and that his followers deified him in a pardonable enthusiasm. More than once, since these pages were written, the reply has been urged: "We cannot allow that the only alternative to admitting his divinity is to condemn Christ as an impostor or fanatic. Christ was and is to us the noblest character in history; but he was not God nor ever claimed deity; and because his disciples deified him, that is no reason why we should be called upon to denounce *him* for that matchless character which in their eyes made him divine." Now, without dwelling upon the gross misstatements of this theory, it need only be noticed here that, assuming it to be true, *Christ was not God*. (That he "did not claim" to be God is certainly false; and, moreover, if it were true, is nothing to the present point.) Now his disciples and all subsequent Christians have believed *he was God*. *In that belief alone* Christendom is reared; so that, upon the shallow theory here alluded to, Christianity is built up upon what—call it misconception, enthusiasm, delusion, or anything else—is none the less, *in fact, a lie*. This is powerfully insisted upon by the modern secularist. See, e. g., a "Discussion" on "Was Jesus an Impostor?" published by Watts, 84 Fleet Street, 1885, pp. 38 and *passim*.

or unintentionally, a perjury; if the blood of the martyrs was spilled to propagate a delusion—and certainly not an innocent delusion—then, as we see at once, the honest alternative is to reject Christianity with horror, to forsake all its teachers, to stop our ears to its blasphemies.

6. The alternative, you say, is too shocking. You would fain be spared the process of investigation, if such an alternative be even conceivable.

My hearers, it cannot be. Christianity, whether or not you accept it as the mainspring of your life, Christianity is—*a fact*.

Face that fact you must.

This much, at least, is due to yourselves.

Is it common honesty to pretend to believe in Christianity upon no better grounds than because you are too timid or too indolent to face the *possibility* that it may be all one gigantic falsehood?*

7. No; whatever may be the faults of your age, it is strong at least in its professions of free thought, candor, and devotion to the cause of truth.

Let no theological bias then preoccupy our

* See a suggestive paper by Prof. Agar Beet in the "Contemporary Review," January, 1891, on "The Certainties of Christianity," esp. pp. 134-136; and compare Dean Church's Sermon on "Responsibility for our Belief" in "Human Life and its Conditions," pp. 75-84.

minds in view of Who? and What? was Jesus. Let no childish prejudice warp our vision in view of the simple facts which will be brought before us.

God is the God of truth. He will condemn no soul that he has made for honest-hearted adhesion to the light which he has given them.

8. But, on the other hand, we must surely beware how we dare to tamper with that light. We must beware lest we be betrayed by the vanity of the human mind into a deliberate self-binding. Let us not start with the preconceived opinion that all things new must needs be right, and all things old must needs be wrong.

For this surely is a sinister temptation to which men's minds are very prone to-day. The integral *facts* of life and death are often juggled with under the specious cover of religious toleration or philosophical candor. We think it magnanimous to hold our judgment in suspense until such time as every difficulty shall have been removed that lies in the path of faith; and in the meantime, on the pleasing score of novelty and easy living, we practically prejudge Christianity to be untrue; for we cannot but perceive that if it be not so, if it be indeed *historical*, it involves the most momentous personal issues as regards ourselves.

9. Let us then approach a question thus car-

rying with it the entire standing-ground of Christianity in a temper free at once from theological prejudice or controversial animus, and, on the other hand, from that want of humility which is the sure indication not so much of *impicty* as of ignorance and unintelligence.

10. One word is necessary in regard to the records—the documents—which will throughout our inquiry be used as the source from which the facts and words of our Lord's life will be drawn.

The vital importance of this point is of course very clear. We must be assured of the credibility of the writers who record the personal claims of Christ before we can arrive at any trustworthy conclusion upon the meaning of those claims. We must know whether or not we can believe that Christ really spoke and acted in a certain way before we can realize or believe in the logical outcome of words and doings which are attributed to him.

11. Now it is obviously out of the question to recapitulate, however briefly, within our present limits even the barest outline of those great and far-reaching problems which are here suggested.

As some of you have lately been reminded,* it is not without adequate evidence that the

* A course of addresses had recently been given upon the History and Criticism of the New Testament.

Christian Church claims our acceptance of the Gospels as genuine historical documents. And you will readily understand that that evidence is of a minute and circumstantial kind, such as could not without prejudice to its real power be treated within the limits of less than an entire series of addresses like the present.

All therefore that can now be attempted is that I should state the general results of scholarly investigation into the historical credibility of the Gospels as already arrived at by experts in criticism. This, and this only, you will feel is an indispensable preliminary to a candid treatment of the subject upon which we are now entering.

12. So far then as the most recent criticism of the evangelistic writings is concerned, I have no apology to offer for treating them throughout these addresses as actual histories.

To this conclusion, it can hardly be denied, the industry of English and Continental students is gradually forcing the opinion of many who yet fail to recognize the logical outcome of such an admission.

13. With regard to *the Synoptists*, the case may be said to be practically beyond all serious dispute.*

* "J'admets comme authentiques les quatre évangiles canoniques," writes M. Renan. This admission will not be

Since the beginning of the present century the text of the first three, and indeed of all the evangelists, has been submitted to the minutest investigation. Scholars and critics of every shade of opinion have, with an instinctive sense of the great issues involved in the question of Gospel credibility, bestowed an amount of laborious research upon their task such as no mere forgeries, however skilful, could for a moment have resisted. And although it can hardly be said even yet that their assiduity has been crowned with success sufficient to recommend any one theory as to the actual composition of the Gospels as entirely beyond dispute, yet it is hardly too much to say that the historical reliability of the Synoptics, as genuine and authentic records of actual events, has now been fairly established.*

forgotten by those who are yet well aware that, for very obvious reasons, M. Renan adds, "Mais leur valeur historique est fort diverse." "Vie de Jésus," *Introd.*, p. xxxvii.

* Perhaps one of the best—that is, the best suited to ordinary readers—as also one of the most recent works upon the Criticism of the Synoptics, will be found in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (9th edition, 1879), Vol. X., Art. "Gospels," pp. 789-843. The article is by the hand of the Rev. E. A. Abbott, D. D., and deals exhaustively, and yet within popular compass, with the questions at issue. By examples of synoptical "harmonies," Dr. Abbott argues in favor of a "triple tradition," shared by the three evangelists in varying proportions, of the actual words and works of our Lord. He places Mark at the head, chronologically, of the synoptists;

14. Turning to *the fourth Gospel*, we approach the very central point of modern critical assault.

and minutely comparing the peculiarities of the three, he places St. Matthew's date at "the crisis immediately preceding the siege of Jerusalem," and St. Luke's at "80 A. D. at the earliest." From this *internal* evidence Dr. Abbott proceeds (pp. 814, sqq.) to summarize the testimony of the church and of early Christian history generally, passing in review the evidence of (1) Paul, 1 Cor. 11:23; (2) Peter, 2 Pet. 1:17; (3) Clement of Rome, "Epistle to Corinthians,"? 95 A. D.; (4) Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, "Shepherd" of Hermas, Papias (his evidence "negative," but "strongly in favor of our Gospels," p. 816), and Justin Martyr. He then arrives (p. 818) at conclusions more or less conjectural, but still such as "would enable the reader to feel additional confidence," as being "supported by the double confirmation of indirect as well as direct evidence."

Referring (p. 842) to the rivalry of the several theories in view of the possibilities of the future, Dr. Abbott aptly quotes the following words of Dr. Sanday ("Academy," Sept. 21, 1878): "It has been pointed out that there has been of late an increasing tendency in the three theories—the Tübingen or adaptation theory, the documentary or Mark theory, the oral tradition theory—to approximate to each other."

Not the least valuable portion of this article is Dr. Abbott's concise summary (p. 841) of these theories and his historical survey of the literature of the Tübingen and other criticism. The article in general is based, Dr. Abbott tells us, on the work of Holtzmann (in Schenkel's "Bibel Lexicon"). See also Archbishop Thomson's Introduction to the Gospels in the "Speaker's Commentary" (published also separately in "Word, Work, and Will," pp. 1-136); and for the whole subject, see Dr. Salmon's "Historical Introduction to the Study of the New Testament" (4th ed., Murray, 1889), pp. 109-190; and Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. "Gospels, Canon," etc., and Westcott's "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels" and "History of the New Testament

You will be aware, of course, that many of the most mysterious and important sayings of Christ in regard to his own personality are only recorded by the author of the fourth Gospel.* So that, while it is important not to overrate this fact,† it is yet very necessary to know how far the results of destructive criticism serve to show whether the Gospel of St. John is honestly believable by a candid reader.

15. Now although it can hardly be maintained that Ewald, the great rationalist, is in courtesy justified in asserting that, in view of the facts before us, "no man who does not will knowingly to choose error and to reject truth

Canon;" also Sanday, "The Gospels in the Second Century;" Tischendorf, "Origin of the four Gospels" (translated by W. L. Gage); Plumptre, Boyle Lectures, "Christ and Christendom," Lecture II., pp. 29-83; Lange, "Life of Christ," Parts III. to VII., pp. 119-286. A popular summary of the skeptical view of the Gospels will be found in E. Clod's "Jesus of Nazareth," pp. 223, sqq., and Note E, pp. 375, sqq.

* Mr. Greg indeed turns this fact into a direct argument against the genuineness of St. John's Gospel. "The public discourses of Jesus in this Gospel turn almost exclusively upon the dignity of his own person. . . . In the first three Gospels we have the message; in the fourth we have nothing but the messenger;" and therefore we "cannot here be dealing with the genuine language of Jesus, but simply with a composition arising out of deep conviction of his superior nature left in the mind of the writer by the contemplation of his splendid genius and his noble and lovely character."—"Creed of Christendom," Vol. II., p. 41 (4th edit.).

† See below, Lecture VI.

can dare to say that the fourth Gospel is not the work of the apostle John;”* yet even this language—which would hardly have escaped the scornful imputation of dogmatism if it had been used by an orthodox theologian—will assuredly sound none too severe to those who have honestly, however slightly, studied the evidence for and against the authenticity of the Gospel of St. John.

16. I will not pretend, on a point so supremely important, to do more than refer to the labors of men whose name alone will guarantee the value of their work.† One of the most valu-

* Cited by Liddon, “Bampton Lectures,” p. 218. “We must declare,” he says elsewhere, “that no author of a book of antiquity is so surely attested as the apostle John for this Gospel.”—“Die Johanneischen Schriften,” etc., Vol. II., p. 409, quoted by Gregory. Canon Liddon’s own conclusions as to the authorship of St. John may well be quoted here. After showing by a minute review of the evidence that its author must have lived within the limits of the first century, “when this is done,” he concludes, “the question of its authenticity is practically decided. It is irrational to suppose that a forgery claiming the name and authority of the beloved disciple could have been written and circulated beneath his very eyes. . . . Arbitrary theories about the time which is thought necessary to develop an idea cannot rightly be held to counterbalance such a solid block of historical evidence as we have been considering.”—“Bampton Lectures,” p. 218.

† Dr. Chadwick, in his “Donnellan Lectures” for 1878-79 (“Christ bearing Witness to Himself”), devotes a lecture to the person of Jesus as described by St. John. His answers to the objections of Renan, Greg, etc., are very suggestive.

able (as it is certainly not the least laborious and learned) of the many contributions to the study of the fourth Gospel is Prof. Westcott's Introduction, published in 1880, in the "Speaker's Commentary." After the work of more than twenty-five years,* Dr. Westcott succeeded in producing what may probably be found to be a supreme vindication of the entirely reliable character of the Gospel and its authorship by St. John himself.

Still more recently the subject of "Modern Criticism in relation to the fourth Gospel" has been treated with equal candor and fulness by the Bampton lecturer for 1890.† In the course of this most important series of lectures Archdeacon Watkins has dealt with the entire question at issue; and the conclusion to which his studies have led him is that ample reason has been shown "for believing that in this century, as in those which have preceded it, there has been an accumulating mass of evidence in favor of the genuineness of the Gospel according to St. John."‡

17. For those who desire to investigate the literature of this subject still further for themselves,

* See p. xcvi. (This was published in 1882 in a separate volume.)

† "Modern Criticism considered in its Relation to the fourth Gospel," by Archdeacon Watkins.—Murray, 1890.

‡ Lecture VIII., p. 417.

attention may be called to the work of Prof. Luthardt,* as revised and translated in 1875 by Mr. Caspar René Gregory. This American scholar has collected† with infinite care the titles—to the number of no less than 491—of works published between 1792 and 1875 upon the literary merits and authenticity of the fourth Gospel. Luthardt himself has reviewed with equal toil and candor the whole range of modern criticism on the subject, from the first assaults of Evanson (1792) and Bretschneider (1820) down to Dr. Lightfoot's replies to "Supernatural Religion" in the "Contemporary Review" of 1874-75. The result of the labors of both Luthardt and his industrious editor has been to confirm them in the conviction that St. John's Gospel is a genuine historical narrative by St. John himself. How this opinion could have been arrived at by honest and competent scholars if the book were a forgery, it is difficult to guess.

18. Among others who in our own language have contributed valuable help to the critical problem, and who have arrived at substantially the same conclusion, must be added the names

* Christian Ernst Luthardt, D. D., "St. John the Author of the fourth Gospel." Revised, translated, and the literature much enlarged by C. R. Gregory. Edinburgh: Clark, 1875.

† Appendix, "Literature of the Disputed Origin of the fourth Gospel from 1792-1875."

of Dr. Sanday* and Dr. Ezra Abbot.† Of Dr. Sanday's "Authorship and Historical Character of the fourth Gospel" (1872), it has been said by a competent critic that "it is eminently candid; and there is no other book in English to compare with it for the light it throws not only on the fourth Gospel itself, but also on the history of its criticism."‡

19. It is commonly supposed among the uninitiated that all able criticism among Continental scholars has pronounced against the genuineness of St. John. The extract from Ewald will have shown how groundless this belief is; and two further selections from German critical opin-

* "Authorship, etc., of fourth Gospel," and also "The Gospels in the Second Century."

† In an appendix to article in American edition (New York, 1868) of Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. "The Word." This author has recently published a separate work on the subject (printed in a volume of "Critical Essays;" Boston, Ellis, 1888).

‡ Rev. E. A. Abbott, D. D., "Encyclopædia Britannica," 9th ed., Vol. X., p. 843. Among other recent (English) contributions to the Johannine controversy may be mentioned Dr. Paton Gloag's "Introduction to the Johannine Writings" (Nisbet, 1891), and Dr. Liddon's remarks upon the subject in his (alas! final) "Preface" to the "Bampton Lectures" (14th edit., 1890). For a concise summary of the most important "literature" on the genuineness of St. John's Gospel, see Ebrard's article on "John the Apostle" in Schaff's edition of Herzog's Religious "Encyclopædia," Vol. II., p. 1191. Cf. Salmon's "Introduction to the New Testament" (4th edit., 1889), Lectures XII.-XVII., pp. 209, sqq.

ion may perhaps be allowed to close this matter so far as our present purpose is concerned. "We may boldly declare," says Ebrard,* "that excepting a few of Paul's epistles, no book of all antiquity, either in Christian or heathen literature, can show such numerous and sure proofs of its authenticity as the Gospel of John." Schaf's† language is more peremptory still: "If this book, which is eternal truth, was written by a deceit-conceiving gnostic, then Jesus Christ for a thousand years has cast out Satan by Beelzebub." When to the well-known names of Westcott‡ and Lightfoot,§ Farrar|| and Alford¶ and Liddon,** Wordsworth†† and Sanday,‡‡ Abbot§§

* J. H. A. Ebrard, 1842, "Wissenschaftliche Kritik des Evangelischen Geschichte." Frankfort-on-Main. Quoted by Gregory, Appendix, loc. cit., p. 307.

† Quoted by Gregory, *ibid.*, 354.

‡ "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels;" "New Testament Canon;" "Commentary on St. John;" occasional writings.

§ "Contemporary Review," December, 1874, January and May, 1875, etc. These papers were reprinted by Bishop Lightfoot (Macmillan & Co.), 1889.

|| "Life of Christ," 10th edit., Vol. II., Excursus x., pp. 474, sqq.

¶ "Commentary," Prolegomena, ch. 5, pp. 50-70.

** "The Doctrine of Christ's Divinity in the Writings of St. John," "Bampton Lectures," V., pp. 208, sqq.

†† "Commentary," Introduction to St. John, pp. 257, sqq.

‡‡ "Authorship," etc. (loc. cit. ante).

§§ American edition of Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," Art. "The Word," Appendix.

and Hutton,* are added those of Continental scholars† (differing as do these on many points), such as Hug, Lange, Schleiermacher and Credner, Reuss, Tholuck, De Wette, Eichhorn, Godet, Pressensé, Thiersch, Hauff, Bauer, Olshausen, Grimm, Ebrard, Schaf, and many more, we may well be content to rest upon the tradition of sixteen centuries, despite the influential names of Bretschneider, Strauss, Baur, Schenkel, Keim, and Renan.

20. So much, then—and little enough it is in view of the importance of the question—as to the adequacy of the documents in which the personal claims of Christ stand recorded.

Let us now consider, as briefly as may be,‡

* R. H. Hutton, "Essays, Theological and Literary," Vol. I., 2d edit., 1880, pp. 150-215.

† For the multifold evidence here alluded to, see Luthardt, work already cited, *passim*.

‡ The whole bearings of the argument from our Lord's sinlessness have been elaborately discussed in the well-known work of Dr. Carl Ullmann ("The Sinlessness of Jesus an Evidence for Christianity," translated from seventh edition by Sophia Taylor. Clark, 1870). The general line of his treatment may be thus roughly indicated. Starting with a discussion of the ideas involved in the use of the terms "sin" and "sinless," Dr. Ullmann proceeds (p. 13) to found his argument upon "the phenomenon presented by the merely human life of Jesus. "In this," he says, "we have an independent point of Christianity, comprehensible to all, and calculated to gain access to minds of the most opposite constitution." He then reviews the testimony to Christ's sinlessness as borne (a) by others (pp. 40-47), and by the Gospel account of his char-

what is meant by the challenge of the text, in which our Lord is recorded to have asked the the Jews, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"*

.21. Such language as this, you will feel at once, presents to us a self-assertion that has well been called "absolutely tremendous." "Must not He who affirms himself to be sinless be either better or worse than all men? *better*, if his testimony be true; and if it be rejected, *worse*, inasmuch as, being sinful, his moral sensibility was too obtuse to discover it?"†

22 For, as we all know full well, it is precisely characteristic qualities, as, e. g., his humility and majesty, etc., and (b) by Christ himself (pp. 69, sqq.) His sinlessness is then argued from the effects produced in the world by his manifestation (pp. 81-106); and next follows a criticism of the various objections which have been urged against his perfection from the Gospel narrative itself (pp. 109-177). The direct connection of the character thus arrived at with the doctrine of Divinity is then treated at length (pp. 196-253); and the whole literature of the subject is dealt with (pp. 254-264). The literature of the Temptation is separately reviewed (pp. 264-291). See also Moorhouse, "Hulsean Lectures," Lecture III., on the "Evidence of our Saviour's Sinlessness," and a very able paper on "The Person of Jesus Christ," by Prof. Riggenbach, in "The Foundation of our Faith" Lectures, published by Strahan & Co., 1863; see esp. pp. 114 sqq.

* The metaphysical question involved in the precise meaning of *ἀμαρτίας* is not here entered upon. It is fully discussed by Ullmann, "Sinlessness of Jesus," etc., ad init., and pp. 15-38.

† Moorhouse, in "Some Modern Religious Difficulties," "Christ the Greatest of all Miracles" (S. P. C. K.), p. 84.

this challenge which no human teacher would dare to utter. The higher and holier the teacher in the eyes of other men, the unworthier is he in his own eyes. The loftier the pedestal on which he finds himself expected to stand, the lowlier is he in his own abasement before the throne of the holy God.* Personal unworthiness—this, most assuredly, is the keynote to his message as regards the mouth of him who delivers it.

“Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.” The burden of the prophet’s weakness† is the burden of our frail humanity in the mouth of all God’s servants. “Rise up, for we are men of like passions with yourselves,”‡ is the anxious protest by which the saint in every age deprecates the homage that is only due to the Lord God.§ “Nolo episcopari”—I am un-

* “Whenever we find deep humility among men it is accompanied with self-distrust and self-accusation. . . . Such . . . is *not* the attitude of Christ.”—R. H. Hutton, “Theological Essays,” I., 258.

† Jer. 1:6.

‡ Cf. Acts 10:26; 14:15; Luke 5:8; 2 Sam. 6:9, etc.

§ “They who have most closely followed Christ confess the difference most readily. Christ says, ‘My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?’ But the ‘Imitation of Christ’ (à Kempis, 14) says, ‘What right have I, so vile a wretch, to complain unto my God if he withdraw his presence and leave me to myself?’ Bunyan and Kempis, Luther and Augustine, Peter and John, would readily have adopted the confession of David that he was shapen in sin. . . . The skeptic is right (Strauss,

willing to take the office of a bishop; it is the strain of the church of God uprising in the mouths of her bishops and her martyrs, her priests and missionaries, from the apostles' time to our own. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."* This, the confession of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, is, and ever has been, the natural confession of every man who is permitted to deliver any message from the throne of the eternal God.†

23. But the one exception to all other men—the one sinless life—could, and did, dare thus to frame the challenge: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"‡

And the challenge remains unanswered now, as it was unanswered then.§ "I find no fault in Him"—the verdict of Pilate is the verdict of mankind to-day.

24. If otherwise, my hearers, let us be true to

'New Life,' I., 264) who insists that 'the best and purest of mankind has ever many sins to accuse himself of.'"—Chadwick, "Christ bearing Witness to Himself," p. 106.

* Isa. 6:5.

† Cf. Exod. 4:10; 6:12, 30.

‡ Pressensé, "Jesus Christ," English translation, p. 288.

§ It may be observed in passing that the impeccability of Christ is distinctly asserted by his apostles, e. g., 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15 (cf. 9:28); 1 Pet. 1:19 and 2:22; 1 John 3:5.

the logic of the dilemma.* If, in the record of His life, we can trace any blemish on the character of Jesus, how is it that even those who entirely reject his divinity can pretend to reverence him, as reverence him they say they do, as far higher than any other man? Surely, he claims to stand on a pedestal altogether distinct; and he must be judged of in accordance with what he claims.†

25. This is recognized by all who thoughtfully examine the ultimate bearings of this momentous argument.‡ “If we once go so far,” says a German writer who has expounded the logical issues of our Lord’s self-assertion with great minuteness, “as to admit that the moral greatness of Jesus is of so superlative a kind that nothing surpassing it is to be found within the sphere of human nature; and if we do this on the ground of the Gospel delineation, we shall be constrained to take the further step, which leads to a belief in his sinless perfection.... If

* See Ullmann, *passim*, especially pp. 157, 251, etc.

† Dr. Liddon aptly quotes Renan’s admission (“Vie de Jésus,” p. 246), “Jésus ne doit pas être jugé sur la règle de nos petites convenances. . . . La position qu’il s’attribuait était celle d’un Être surhumain, et il voulait qu’on le regardât comme ayant avec Dieu un rapport plus élevé que celui des autres hommes.”

“To make Him sinless is to make Him supernatural.”—

‡ Chadwick, “Christ bearing Witness to Himself,” p. 109.

† See some valuable remarks by Dorner upon the increasing reception of the truth of Christ’s moral excellence, “Person of Christ” (Clark’s translation), Div. II., vol. 3, p. 222, etc.

Jesus, as we know him from history, is as great a man as [the humanitarian] Pécaut* admits, he is also *perfect*; but if, according to the given conditions, he is not perfect, then he is not truly great in any sense."†

This, I certainly believe, is the only just inference from the facts upon which we have to decide. "If Christ," says Friedrich von Schlegel, "were not more than Socrates, then a Socrates he was not."‡ No, Dr. Ullmann is surely right when he denies any logical standing-ground to the man who "thinks it possible to give up Christ, the Son of God and Redeemer of the world, and yet to retain the pure and holy Son of Man as an example."§

26. It is in strict deference to this great dilemma that men have taken serious objection to the perfection of the *merely* human character of our Lord.|| It is urged, for instance, that on

* "Le Christ et la Conscience."

✓ † Ullmann, "Sinlessness of Jesus," p. 157.

‡ "Philosophy of History," Lect X., p. 278.

§ "Sinlessness of Jesus," p. 251. Strauss recognizes the true issues. If Christ really advanced the claims which are here imperfectly portrayed, Strauss admits that he "should lose faith in his excellence *as a man*." ("The Old Faith and the New," p. 56). Compare Sadler, "Emmanuel," p. 240: "We have to take our choice: He was either 'God with us,' ... or, ... no example: His own words condemned him."

|| See especially F. W. Newman, "Phases of Faith," pp. 146, sqq.—and compare the Discussion between two secular-

more than one occasion* he evinced a want of self-control, amounting, in the too hasty words of the objector, to a positive "loss of temper." It is thus that a humanitarian is bound to regard the righteous anger† of One who is jealous for everything that concerns the majesty of that Godhead in which, as co-equal Son of the eternal Father, he had co-equal share. So, too, it is asserted with strict logical propriety if this divine prerogative be lost sight of, that he treated his parents with an inexcusable wilfulness or even disobedience as a child,‡ and with slight and contemptuous disregard at a later period of his earthly life.§ Other charges, equally serious

ists, "Was Jesus an Impostor?" (Watts, 1885) *passim*, esp., pp. 38, etc.

* Matt. 21 : 12-17; 16 : 23.

† For a plain exposition of the true character of Christ's anger, see Row, "Moral Teaching of the New Testament," pp. 83-87. "The capability of being moved to anger is an essential ingredient in absolute holiness. It is simply impossible for a holy man to witness the most aggravated forms of moral evil without the feeling of righteous indignation being excited by them. So far would the absence of this feeling be a virtue, that it would simply imply absence of the perception of the difference between right and wrong.... In ordinary men, the usual excitement to anger is not a sense of outraged holiness, but of violated self-love.... The anger of Jesus Christ.... is in every instance absolutely unconnected with self-love.... [In the case of his rebuke to St. Peter] it is undeniable that the anger of Christ displays itself in the most absolute form of unselfishness," etc. Pp. 83-85.

‡ Luke 2 : 41-52.

§ John 2 : 4.

upon the supposition of his *mere* humanity, are connected with his apparently direct repudiation of sinlessness on the occasion of the young man's question regarding eternal life* (Matt. 19:16; Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18); with his cursing the barren fig-tree;† with his sending the devils into the herd of swine at Gadara;‡ with his stern denunciation of Pharisaism;§ with the relationship between himself and the apostate Judas;|| with his reply concerning the tribute

* "He is not denying that he is good: but he insists that none should call him so who did not believe him to be God." —Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 23, note ^h. So *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 367.

The objection is minutely examined by Ullmann, "Sinlessness," p. 153, sqq. See also Riggenbach, in "The Foundations of our Faith," pp. 115, sqq., and p. 121.

† Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:13. The objections generally take the form of charges to the effect that Christ showed wanton disregard of the rights of property, or that he displayed a mere petulance in dealing with the fig-tree. See Ullmann, p. 148.

‡ Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39. Ullmann, p. 148.

§ Matt. 23:13-39. Luke 11:42-52.

|| John 13:18, 27, etc.

In connection with the general argument, it may be as well to take cognizance here of the alleged limitation of Christ's human knowledge. The question is carefully treated at length by Dr. Liddon ("Bampton Lectures," pp. 455, sqq.). The teaching of the church on this subject is, that in virtue of his true divinity Christ possessed absolute intellectual infallibility; but that on one particular occasion (Mark 13:32), our Lord in his human soul was, at the time of his speaking,

to Cæsar;* the "energetic and pretentious" style of his discourses,† his behavior as a child towards his parents;‡ and so forth.

27. Now in all these cases it is of the last importance to keep steadily in view that primary canon of literary interpretation and first axiom

devoid of one particular point of knowledge. "That he was ever completely ignorant of aught else, or that he was ignorant on this point at any other time, are inferences for which we have no warrant and which we make at our peril" (Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 467). See also Moorhouse's "Hulsean Lectures," 1864: "Our Lord Jesus Christ the Subject of Growth in Wisdom;" especially Lecture IV., which deals with the "kind and degree of human ignorance" which "were left possible to Christ by the fact of his human sinlessness" (pp. 100-139). See Wilberforce, "The Incarnation," pp. 68, sqq.: "Without asserting that the man Christ Jesus was ignorant, it may be said that he was ignorant, as man, of that which by his other nature was known to him. His growth [in wisdom] was no delusion, but a real one. He made trial of those channels of communication whereby the children of men are furnished with knowledge," etc. (p. 71). For a popular survey of the theological technicalities involved in this momentous question, see "The Gospel for the Nineteenth Century," Appendix B (pp. 359, sqq.), where "The Limitation of Christ's Human Knowledge" is fully discussed.

* Matt. 22 : 17; Mark 12 : 14; Luke 20 : 22.

† Matt. 13 : 10-15, etc. Those who care to see Mr. F. W. Newman's objections polemically discussed will not overlook "The Eclipse of Faith," and its sequel, "A Defence of 'The Eclipse of Faith'" (Longmans, 1852 and 1854), in which latter work is an appendix giving at length extracts from Mr. Newman's strictures upon the "Moral Perfection of Christ."

‡ See Discussion between Mrs. Wilkie and Mr. Moss, on the question "Was Jesus an Impostor?" (Watts & Co., Fleet St., 1885), pp. 87, cf. 42, etc.

of history, that *the subject must never be wrested from its context*. The circumstances of an action determine its true bearings. The deeds of a man are intimately connected with the motives that influence him, as well as with the antecedents from which his deeds have been derived.

28. The accusations referred to are, if carefully examined in the light of Christ's divinity, absolutely groundless. Apart from the admission of his divinity, such charges become grave enough. But as concerning the sum total of his attributes, human and divine, they are in each case, if taken in connection with his actions before and after, seen to be frivolous and wholly fallacious.* They vanish when Christ is seen not only as the Son of Mary, but the Lord God himself; not only the faint and weary Man of Sorrows, but the divine Messiah, the Word of God himself, Maker of the natural world, Searcher and Judge of human hearts.

29. On the other hand, assuming him to be a

* "No attempts to fasten sin upon him have had a trace of success, except so far as they have gone hand in hand with a denial of his personal claims. Strauss, for example, thinks it not merely fanaticism, but unjustifiable self-exaltation, for a Man to imagine himself so separated from other men as to set himself 'before them as their future judge.' Strauss, we must admit, is perfectly right if the claim of Christ to judge the world is not strictly based upon fact."—Liddon, "Some Elements of Religion," p. 230.

mere man, these and similar accusations bring down Jesus Christ to a level from which humanitarians themselves have long since rescued him.*

If His life is really thus honeycombed with moral imperfections, how is it that the humanitarian can be consistent in elevating him to a level incomparably higher than that of a Socrates or an Antoninus?†

* Thus, even the author of "Supernatural Religion" sees in Christ one who, "surpassing in his sublime simplicity the moral grandeur of Sakya Mouni, and putting to the blush the . . . teaching of Socrates and Plato, . . . presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with his own lofty principles" ("Supernatural Religion," 4th edit., II., 487).

† How entirely M. Renan fails in depicting a *consistent* explanation of Christ's Personality has been well exposed by Dr. Chadwick. The Jesus of M. Renan, he well observes, is one who lives every moment in the bosom of God, and is persuaded that God is continually interested in his affairs; yet he resorts to fraud to save his work from failure. ("Vie de Jésus," 15th edit., pp. 78, 80, 267, 375.) He succeeds by an amiable character and an infinite charm, a voice of extraordinary sweetness, a beauty pure and sweet, a preaching suave and sweet, by sweet gayety and amiable pleasantries. (*Ibid.*, pp. 84, 158, 174, 196.) Yet he is no sooner thwarted than he "transgresses the same limits of human nature," and "makes war upon the most legitimate cravings of the heart." His "singular sweetness," however, "passes off these exaggerations." (*Ibid.*, pp. 325, 327).—"Christ Bearing Witness to Himself," Preface, p. 21. For a review of the position of older objectors (Parker and Hennel), see Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," pp. 227, sqq. (cheap edition, 1864).

30. But that all such charges are, in fact, captious and puerile has been virtually admitted by those who yet reject his claim to be divine. This may be seen to be the case by two typical quotations which have been already cited by a thoughtful and candid writer,* as representing the general consensus of opinion among free-thinkers in modern times. "Jesus Christ," says M. Renan, "is the highest of those columns which show to man his origin and his destiny.... In him is centred all that there is in our nature of what is good and what is elevated."†

31. Even more valuable is the testimony of the late Mr. John Stuart Mill. "Whatever else," he says, "may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left, a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers.... About the life and sayings of Jesus there is [that] which ... must place [him] in the very first rank of the men of sublimer genius of whom our species can boast.... This preëminent genius is combined with the qualities of

* "The Gospel for the Nineteenth Century." Dr. Farrar ("Witness of History to Christ," p. 82, note 1) truly says, "It should be definitely understood that if Christ were *not* sinless and divine, he would be lower, not higher, than all who have lived holily on earth: for then his claims would be false, and his Personality stained with the poor vice of self-satisfaction."

† "Vie de Jésus," pp. 457, 458.

probably the greatest moral reformer . . . who ever existed upon earth."*

32. Thus we have the most impartial testimony to the exalted character of Christ—a testimony that practically sanctions his own tremendous claim to be *free from sin*.†

* "Essays on Religion," pp. 253-255.

† It may be desirable to allude in passing to the great question which underlies this subject, namely, as to Christ's liability to temptation. The difficulties involved in this direction are a well-known theological topic. Put into plain English, they generally take the form of a dilemma which may be thus stated: If Christ was liable to temptation, there must have been some inward *response* in his nature to the allurements of evil; in which case he cannot be said to have been really sinless. If, on the other hand, he was not liable to such allurements, the reality of his manhood is impaired, so far at least as any real *sympathy* with the strength of our temptations is concerned. But the first of these inferences is by no means just. It can hardly be denied that the other actions of Christ's life proved that he possessed free will in its most absolute liberty of choice. This would surely involve liability to temptation, and full knowledge of sin's allurements, without in the least implying that *consent of the will* in which sin consists. But it may be admitted that on such a point, where the very border-line of the divine and human natures is under treatment, the mystery of the subject precludes any rash attempt at definition. A concise summary of the theology of this great question may be seen in Note C appended to Canon Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," where the usual objections are minutely criticised. (See also Ullmann, "Sinlessness," pp. 123, 144, 155; and especially pp. 264-291, where is a survey of the literature bearing upon this subject.) The church teaches that in view of his sinless manhood Christ was inaccessible to direct temptation; but this does not impair the value of his

And we may be very sure that his enemies would not have left the challenge unanswered if they could have replied to it.

The fact then remains that Christ claimed to be free from sin, and that his pretensions were undisputed in his life, as they are undisputed now. Never once does he exhibit any sign of shrinking from the full responsibility of such a challenge as our text contains.

Though it is he who rebukes the self-righteousness of the Pharisee with measureless indignation; though he claimed to be meek and lowly in heart; though he teaches that the deep penitence produced by a sin-stained conscience is the indispensable condition of returning to the Father—yet he himself never once in the faintest degree betrays the slightest consciousness of guilt, the smallest trace of a personal remorse.*

redemptive work. "He is not less truly representative of our race because in him it has recovered its perfection. His victory is none the less real and precious because, morally speaking, it was inevitable. Nay, this perfect internal sinlessness . . . was itself essential to his redemptive relationship to the human family." (Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 516.) He "took our nature upon him, precisely in order to repel sin altogether from it, and thus to show us of what it was capable, by showing us himself." (*Ibid*).

See, in connection with this subject, Canon MacColl's lectures on "Christianity in relation to Science and Morals" (Rivingtons, 1890,) pp. 140-148.

* This negative testimony again appears in the constant

33. What, then, my hearers, is the logical outcome of such a claim as this?

What becomes of the sincerity, the unselfishness, the humility of Christ, if, "after considering the language which he actually used about himself, we should go on to deny that he is God"? *

34. Is he humble thus to assert his own sinlessness, if he be a man, even a very saintly man, and nothing more? Can he claim such an exalted position in philosophy and in morals as to point all men to himself as sinless, and as the universal teacher,† if he be indeed only man? If he be also God, his language is intelligible; otherwise, as Dr. Liddon well observes, "You

antagonism to evil which pervades the life of Christ. "He drew [sin] forth to light, rebuked, opposed it to the uttermost. His whole life was devoted to maintaining a conflict against it."—Ullmann, "Sinlessness," p. 70.

* The writer is indebted to Canon Liddon for this three-fold division of our Lord's moral characteristics.—"Bampton Lectures" pp. 192-205.

† "One is your Master, even Christ." "Ye call me Lord and Master; and ye says well, for so I am." "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," etc. (Matt. 23:8, 10; John 13:13; Matt. 11:28, etc.). "The truth is," writes a great lay thinker, "that the pervading and deepest characteristic of Christ's language concerning himself is the humility not of conscious unworthiness, like Paul's, but of conscious submission, of filial perfection." This absence of self-reproach, together with absolute filial submission, is, he urges, "a combination . . . unique in history."—R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," I., 248, etc.

must conclude that some of the most precious sayings in the Gospels are but the outbreak of a preposterous self-laudation, breathing the very spirit of another Lucifer." * So, too, Mr. F. W. Newman is only logical when he speaks of the merely human Christ as not only a "vacillating pretender," but as exhibiting "egregious vanity," "blundering self-sufficiency," "vain conceit," and "ostentation." † So, lastly, Mr. Greg is perfectly justified in denouncing the Jesus of John's Gospel as evincing "an overweening tendency to self-glorification." ‡

* Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 196.

† "Phases of Faith," pp. 149-154.

‡ "Creed of Christendom" [4th edit.], vol. II., p. 41. M. Renan admits, "Il ne prêchait pas ses opinions, il se prêchait lui-même."—"Vie de Jésus" pp. 76, 79, etc. The true bearings of Christ's tremendous claims are well stated by Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 200: "Certain it is that no mere man could take the same attitude of supremacy towards the race, and inherent affinity or oneness with God, without fatally shocking the confidence of the world by his effrontery." Referring to some of these claims, the writer well asks, "Was there ever displayed an example of effrontery and spiritual conceit so preposterous? Was there ever a man that dared to put himself on the world in such pretensions? . . . What but mockery and disgust does he challenge as the certain reward of his audacity?" Christ "demands repentance from all, but never for a moment hints at any need of it himself. With all his matchless lowliness, he advances personal claims which, in a mere man, would be the very delirium of religious pride."—Geikie, "Life and Words of Christ," vol. I., p. 6.

35. Again, what becomes of his unselfishness, if beneath all his apparent self-sacrifice we are to perceive the taint of a merely human self-interest? How can we praise that perpetual self-assertion, unless it be the fitting expression of a true divinity? * He bids men make him the centre of their affections. If he be God, this is but the natural direction that human worship should take; but if he be only man, does it not savor of a selfish personal ambition which must be a fatal flaw in the merely human idol? How is he unselfish, if in his language of self-assertion he is simply exalting his own human self? How can we call him disinterested, if in all his teaching he is but giving prominence to a martyrdom which was no martyrdom in fact, but the just punishment of an interested self-conceit?

36. Lastly, if he be not God, was Jesus Christ sincere? Was it truthful in a human teacher to deceive and mystify his hearers by deliberately using language which could not but mislead them as to the nature of his own personality? †

* "Such claims from the lips of a merely human rabbi could only have been spoken in the delirium of vanity," etc.—Stanford, "Alternatives of Faith and Unbelief," p. 40.

† Compare the remarkable criticism of Lessing: "If Christ is not truly God, then Mahometanism was an undoubted improvement on the Christian religion. Mahomet, on such a supposition, would indisputably have been far more vera-

37. These, you will see at once, are questions that must be answered by any candid inquirer into the personal character of Jesus Christ.

There can surely be but one possible answer in view of his unbroken silence as regards any sense of personal unworthiness.

The nearer he had been, as a mere man, to the unapproachable holiness of God, the keener, surely, would have been his sense of utter and complete unworthiness.* "Blemishes," it has well been said, "which might have been passed unobserved in a spiritual twilight, are lighted up with torturing clearness by those searching, scorching rays of moral truth that stream from

cious, more circumspect, and more zealous for the honor of God," etc.—"Beiträge zur Geschichte und Litteratur," vol. II., p. 410, quoted by Schlegel.

"How can One who answered in the affirmative to the tremendous question whether he were indeed the Christ the Son of God, be sinless, if he were saying what he was well aware was not the truth?"—Dr. Cazenove, in the "Christian Remembrancer," January, 1864, p. 197.

See Mr. R. H. Hutton's valuable criticism of Renan's "Vie de Jésus"—Theological Essays, vol. I., p. 270, etc.

* Cf. Strauss, "New Life," I., 264: "As an individual becomes morally purified, the moral feeling itself is more acutely sensitive to the slightest impurity of moral motive, the slightest deviation from the ideal" (quoted by Chadwick).

"It may be seen by the merest glance at the Gospels that the moral discrimination and advancement of Jesus were at least far above the ordinary standard of human attainment. . . . He whose vision was so keen, whose thoughts about God and

the bright sanctity of God upon the soul that beholds it." *

38. My hearers, I could, if time permitted, bring before you a host of witnesses from every age and from every sect of thinkers to support, by their testimony, the validity of this supreme claim of Jesus Christ.† I could remind you that "even a Francis of Assisi, and a Vincent de Paul, and many of the sweetest and purest of the saints, did not escape the pestilent breath of slander; yet, though he lived in familiar intercourse with publicans and harlots, his worst enemies never dared to breathe suspicion on the man were so noble and clear, could not have failed to discern that in himself which even evil men are able to discover. But if indeed there had been undiscovered and unacknowledged evil in the heart of Jesus, this would argue in him a moral nature exceptionally inert and unsensitive. For in those who are sinful nothing more truly betokens great purity and saintliness of character than the humble confession of sin and demerit in the sight of God. But . . . Jesus never once exhibits this consciousness," etc.—MOORHOUSE, "Hulsean Lectures," 1864, p. 78. Cf. Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," ch. x., *passim*.

* Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 164.

† "It is not the tendency of any form of modern research to cast supreme doubt on the sinlessness of Christ. Skepticism finds itself more and more exclaiming with Rousseau, 'Socrates died like a man; the Founder of Christianity like a God!' . . . Modern skepticism . . . has insight enough not to deny the sinlessness of the Author of Christianity. . . . When it comes to character, it is very nearly dumb before the challenge of Christianity to show any evil there."—Joseph Cook, "Boston Lectures," "Orthodoxy," p. 155.

spotless innocence of Christ." * I could remind you that Strauss speaks of him as "the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion—the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible." † "Nothing purer, nobler [than the character of Christ] has yet dawned on human thoughts," was the verdict of the great Unitarian, Channing. "I know nothing so sublime," is his verdict elsewhere. ‡ Are we then, or are we not, to conclude that the character thus confessed to be admirable beyond all others, is, after all, a paragon of ingenious fraud? For, as it has well been said, "If it be a fiction, it follows that the greatest power which has ever been brought to bear on man and which has exerted the mightiest influence, is founded on a lie." § Napoleon || said of him that "none else was like him; that he was more than man, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely firm, and infinitely gentle." "Have thou nothing to do with that just man," said the Roman lady. ¶ "This man

* Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," p. 83, note 1.

† "Vergängl. und Bleibende," p. 132 (quoted by Farrar).

‡ See "The Gospel for Nineteenth Century," pp. 346, 358.

§ Row, "Moral Teaching of the New Testament" (S.P.C.K.), p. 93, sqq.

|| Farrar, loc. cit., p. 81; cf. Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," pp. 147, 148; so Geikie, "Life of Christ," p. 13; Lacordaire, "Conferences" (English trans.), pp. 37, 38.

¶ Matt. 27: 19.

hath done nothing amiss," * exclaimed the dying thief. "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood," is the self-accusation of him who betrayed it. † "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," was the expostulation of his judge. ‡

39. My hearers, you will forbear with this utterly unworthy summary of the argument based upon our blessed Lord's entire sinlessness.

You will not have any difficulty in seeing how this tremendous claim of our Lord was intolerable to the Jewish mind; how their leaders among the rabbis and legalists saw that the only escape from the awful dilemma it involved was to kill him outright. Conscious that their own artificial lives must suffer by comparison with such a life of truth as his; aware that their own influence must wane when brought into collision with the authority of One who could challenge his worst enemies to convince him of a single immoral word or act; driven desperate by his pitiless but deliberate exposure of their own hypocrisy, no wonder they goaded on the deluded people to reject him as an evil-doer; no wonder that they taught them to clamor for Barabbas, red-handed criminal, in preference to the sinless Galilean.§

* Luke 23 : 41. † Matt. 27 : 4. ‡ Matt. 27 : 24.

§ Mr. F. W. Newman explains the matter somewhat differently, "Phases of Faith," p. 158: "When He had resolved

40. They were but logical in so doing; for to have let him live would have been to have confessed themselves false teachers, blind leaders of the blind, impostors, hypocrites; and thus he was condemned to the shameful torture of a felon's execution.

So true is it, in the words of Dr. Farrar, that "if we reject his Godhead, then, though we took not up stones to stone him, we might well turn from him with agonies of wrath and tears. There is, in such a case, but one step from our adoring devotion to our indignant shame. . . . If, not being divine, he yet claimed divinity, we must needs shrink back from him, revolted and appalled."*

to claim Messiahship publicly, one of two results was inevitable if that claim was ill-founded, viz., either he must have become an impostor in order to screen his weakness, or he must have retracted his pretensions amid much humiliation and have retired into privacy to learn sober wisdom. From these alternatives there was only escape by death, and upon death Jesus purposely rushed." The logical meaning of this is obvious: Christ, a deceiver or fanatic, was ultimately on the verge of having his deceit or fanaticism publicly exposed. Impelled by vanity (!), he committed suicide, with a view to stamp his falsehood with the seal of martyrdom.

* "Witness of History to Christ," p. 85. Of Mr. F. W. Newman's seventh chapter in "Phases of Faith," where the self-assertion of Christ is directly admitted and turned into an argument against our complete admiration of his merely human character, it has well been said by Dr. Chadwick that "it proposes to prove that when the supernatural Person is denied, the supernatural morality must also be surrendered.

41. But if (as we may surely now at least suspect) his blood was truly innocent; if unblemished holiness is an impossible adjunct of even the holiest saint, and yet the necessary attribute of God and God alone; then surely now, if never before, every intelligent spectator of that matchless life will see that our creed is no longer a shibboleth or a password of salvation, but a vital, soul-convincing fact, in the knowledge of which we fall down in awe before him in the enthusiasm of a lifelong self-surrender to him—to Jesus, perfect Man, and therefore perfect God.

And it does prove this. The choice lies between two alternatives. Cease to revere Jesus, or consent to adore Christ." "Donnellan Lectures," p. 87, note. "Our Lord's human glory," writes Canon Liddon, "fades before our eyes . . . apart from the truth of his divinity. He is only perfect as Man because he is truly God. . . The choice really lies between the hypothesis of conscious and culpable insincerity, and the belief that Jesus speaks literal truth, and must be taken at his word" ("Bampton Lectures," p. 203).

II.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO BE THE TRUTH;
CONDEMNED FOR PROPAGATING A
LIE IN THE NAME OF GOD.

"I AM . . . THE TRUTH." "FOR THIS CAUSE
CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR
WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH." — John 14:6;
18:37.

"FOR A GOOD WORK WE STONE THEE NOT;
BUT . . . BECAUSE THAT THOU, BEING A MAN,
MAKEST THYSELF GOD." — John 10:33.

"Truth is no mere abstraction ; it is a real being ; it is God."—PLATO.

"God is the first and eternal of all the truths which can possibly exist, and the one whence all others proceed."—DESCARTES.

"It would be strange indeed that such a Teacher should lay the foundation of his teaching in falsehood."—BISHOP OF ELY.

"We beseech the Father of Lights, if he is the God of infinite charity we proclaim him to be, to tell us whether all our thoughts of freedom and truth have proceeded from the father of lies ; whether for eighteen centuries we have been propagating a mockery when we have said that there is a Son of God who is Truth."—F. D. MAURICE, "Theological Essays," p. 91.

"Is Christ a chimera or a reality? Does he belong to fable or to history? This is the question."—LACORDAIRE.

"No human being on earth could set up the least of these pretensions without being set down at once as a madman or blasphemer."—P. SCHAFF, "Person of Christ," p. 93.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF TRUTH, IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA.

I. OUR subject presents itself to-day with credentials such as should surely commend it to the days in which we live.

With all its faults our age has, at any rate, no feeling for intellectual or moral falsehood. Whatever idols its temper tolerates, conscious deception is not one of them.

One green spot at least there is in the wilderness of its Pyrrhonism, and that spot is its reverence for truth.

Nor will a wise theology seek any better treatment than this spirit, if honestly carried out, will secure for her. Her doctrines claim only to be true, and on this ground alone she demands the patient investigation of her credentials.*

* And on this ground alone the true scientist will admit the justice of the demand. "If any one," says Prof. Huxley, "is able to make good the assertion that his theology rests upon valid evidence, . . . then such theology will take its place as a part of science."—"Critiques and Addresses." Quoted by Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 46.

2. For although the spirit of this age is analytical even to a fault; although it submits all and single of the beliefs which it inherits to the drastic solvent of its criticism; still it is truth, and truth alone, that is at stake; and precious beyond all its other treasures is, by its own admission, the "jewel" of "fair play."

With almost savage earnestness it reiterates the peremptory avowal of Pascal, "God owes it to mankind not to lead them into error." *

3. Borrowing from paganism the disinterested freedom of speculation and honesty of research which is the characteristic of all early philosophy,† it pronounces, with the Greek moralist, that "falsehood of any kind is disgraceful, while the truth is noble and praiseworthy."‡

Philosophy itself was defined by Aristotle as the "science of truth."§

To pursue truth for its own sake is said by Mr. Lecky to be "one of the latest flowers of virtue that bloom in the human heart."|| But it is a flower which is beginning to show its blossoms in our midst to-day.

* "Dieu doit aux hommes de ne pas les induire en erreur."—"Pensées."

† Lecky, "History of European Morals," II., 201.

‡ Aristotle, "Nic. Eth.," IV., 7.

§ "Met." II., 2, and *passim*.

|| "History of European Morals," I., 146.

"Truth is the seal of God," was the verdict of a Jewish rabbi.* "But what is truth?" was another of the Jewish questions, to which the answer was, "The living God and King eternal."† By the same sure instinct Plato confesses that "Truth is no mere abstraction; it is a real being; it is God."‡

4. Thus it is, then, that "faith shrinks not from any inquiry which has truth for its aim."§ And so it is that in considering the claim of Jesus Christ to an absolute veracity in word and deed, in life and doctrine, in example and in ministry, we are approaching what should be, at any rate, not an uncongenial task. No suspicion of theological coloring need prejudice our argument to-day.

In the paramount urgency of the search, in the sovereign importance of the end of our toil, it is time, we all feel, to be at least cautious and modest in regard to the opinions of our opponents. Now, if never before, we may hope that

* "When the Great Synagogue had been weeping, praying, and fasting for a long time, a little roll fell from the firmament to them, in which was written 'Truth.' Rabbi Chaniach saith, "Hence learn that truth is the seal of God'" (quoted by Lightfoot, on John 6:27).

† Quoted by Westcott, on John 18:37, "Commentary," p. 261.

‡ Plato, "Rep.," VII., 527.

§ Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 23.

the words of the historian I have just quoted may be held to be commencing their fulfilment. "By enlarged intellectual culture," he writes, "men come at last to pursue truth for its own sake, to esteem it a duty to emancipate themselves from party spirit, prejudices, and passion; . . . they aspire to the intellect, not of a sectarian, but of a philosopher, . . . not of a partisan, but of a statesman." *

5. No apology, then, is needed to-day in inviting you to consider what is implied by the claim of Jesus Christ to be the Truth.

It is the boast of the high-priests of Positivism that the knowledge they aim at is to be "a great central creative principle"† in the mystery of human life—a truth which will irradiate humanity with its beams.

"The sole and only task of the scientific inquirer," says Prof. Haeckel, in his "Plea for Freedom in Science and in Teaching,"‡ is "to seek for truth, and to teach what he has discerned to be the truth, indifferent as to . . . consequences."

"The thing we have to seek out is . . . ulti-

* Lecky, "History of European Morals," I., p. 146.

† Frederic Harrison, "Nineteenth Century," March, 1881.

‡ Page 98.

mate truth,"* is the avowal of Mr. Herbert Spencer at the outset of his endeavor to co-ordinate, harmonize, and unify the apparently conflicting elements of human knowledge. "In proportion," he says, "as we love truth more and victory less, we shall become anxious to know what it is which leads our opponents to think as they do. . . . We shall aim to supplement the portion of truth we have found with the portion found by them."†

6. Thus truth, by general consent, has, of its own peculiar royalty, a claim upon us all.

All thinking men, of whatever age and of whatever creed, have now an instinctive reverence for truth. They recognize her inherent sanctity. They pay her the homage due to her divine supremacy.

Truth—it is the sheet anchor of their hopes.‡

* "First Principles," p. 21, and *passim*.

Of Pilate's question, "What is truth?" Mr. Baldwin Brown reminds us that "it is the question of all human philosophies." ("First Principles of Ecclesiastical Truth," p. 3.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 12. "The Bible tells us that truth is too sacred and religious a thing to be sacrificed to the mere gratification of the fancy, or party spirit, or the prejudices of education, or attachment to the opinions of human teachers."—J. H. NEWMAN, "Universal Sermons," p. 8.

‡ Truth is spoken of by a distinguished lay thinker as "that one great idea for the sake of which even" atheism "considers all . . . sacrifices as nothing" (R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," 2nd edit., vol. I., p. 19).

It is the rallying cry of all true hearts in the smoke and din of conflict; it is the one pearl of great price which the merchantmen are seeking; it is the goal of our science, the *summum bonum* of our ethics, the fulfilment of our highest aspirations in politics and philosophy alike.

"The truth," says Mr. Mill, in his "Essays on Religion,"* "is our first and great concernment. If religion is true, its usefulness follows without any proof. . . . If religion be false, nothing but good can be the consequence of rejecting it."

"Oh send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me."† This, at any rate, is a Scriptural prayer which the most advanced scientist may surely be credited with holding dear to him.

7. It is not hard to collect, from the thoughts I have already suggested, that truthfulness has come to be regarded as the first and most obvious test of human character. "No character," it has well been said, "is regarded with any kind of approbation in which [veracity] is want-

* Pp. 67, 73.

† Psalm 43:3. "The prayer of Ajax was for light," is the motto adopted by the author of a well-known assault upon the "Creed of Christendom" (W. R. Greg). Cf. the remarks of the author of "Supernatural Religion," *Intro.*, pp. xci., sqq.

ing. It is made more than any other the test distinguishing a good from a bad man.”*

Now let this axiom of morals be carried with us to-day.

8. Let us be content to abide by its direct and honest application to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.†

If it be found that on this theory of His mere humanity his life is marred as a moral ideal by a fatal inability to stand the test of truth; if his fairest seeming assertions must be credited with a radical insincerity; if, on this theory, the commonest maxims of merely human veracity are seen to have been habitually ignored; if he is seen, upon this same supposition, to have claimed a sincerity which is utterly inconsistent with the monstrous falsehood of his tremendous claims—then, I say, we owe it to our fellow-men, we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to the God of

* Lecky, “History of European Morals,” I., 144.

† In days when it was needful to insist upon our Lord's true humanity, this primary axiom of morals was made a premise in the Catholic argument. “The great church teachers of antiquity . . . habitually argue that it belonged to his essential truth to be what he seemed to be. He seemed to be human, therefore he was human” (Liddon, “Bampton Lectures,” p. 24, who quotes from Irenæus, “Adv. Hær.” v. 1, 2: *εἰ δὲ μὴ ὡν ἄνθρωπος ἐφαίνετο ἄνθρωπος . . . οὕτε ἀληθεῖα τις ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ*, κ. τ. λ.). So Augustine, “De Div. Qu.” 83, qu. 14: “Si phantasma fuit corpus Christi, fefellit Christus; et, si fefellit, veritas non est. Est autem veritas Christus. Non ergo phantasma fuit corpus ejus”).

Truth, we owe it to the Truth itself, to wash our hands of collusion in the stupendous lie which all this suggests.

In the words of one of the profoundest thinkers the University of Oxford has ever produced, Dean Mansel, you must be "prepared to affirm . . . that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor. . . . Either he was what he proclaimed himself to be—the Incarnate Son of God, . . . or the civilized world for eighteen centuries has been deluded by a cunningly devised fable; and he, from whom that fable came, has turned that darkness to light, from Satan to God, with a lie in his right hand."*

9. For consider the general characteristics of the ministry of our blessed Lord.

We all know enough of his teaching to be aware that deceit was the one cardinal sin for which he had no mercy. "I hate the sins of unfaithfulness:" this was the very mainspring of his life.† He who could be lenient to the

* Mansel, "Bampton Lectures," p. 174. So, again, "Christ can be our Redeemer only if he is what he proclaims himself to be; . . . if he is not this, his moral teaching began with falsehood and was propagated by delusion" (*Ibid.*, p. 176).

† M. Renan can hardly expect ordinary minds to follow him in his notorious theory as to Christ gradually learning to connive at falsehood in order to "propagate the truth." Or, if he can prevail upon us to accept it, he will hardly sustain our belief in his "immense moral superiority" (see "Vie de

fallen woman could show no mercy to the hypocrite. He who could be tender to every other class of criminals was irreconcilable when face to face with Pharisees. And this was because of the inherent falsehood, the ingrained deception, of their lives. Imposture in word or deed, was, in his sight, unpardonable.*

10. In entire harmony with this uncompromising hostility to falsehood in every shape is the obvious and consistent sincerity of Jesus in all his teaching. It has been truly said of him that "He possessed that one indispensable qualification for any teacher—he believed in what he said without reserve, and he said

Jésus," 15th edit., pp. 96, 97). On this very obvious defect in M. Renan's portraiture of Christ it has well been asked, "How would the sincerity of a human teacher deserve the name, if passively, without repudiation, without protest, he should allow language . . . to be popularly construed into a public claim to share the rank and name of the great God in heaven? . . . M. Renan indeed assures us, somewhat eagerly, that there are many standards of sincerity ('Vie de Jésus,' 252, 359: 'Sa conscience . . . avait perdue quelque chose de sa limpidité primordiale,' etc.); that is to say, that it is possible under certain circumstances to acquiesce knowingly in what is false, while yet being, in some transcendental sense, sincere" (Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," pp. 201, sqq.).

* Cf. "Christ's Teaching and Influence on the World," Bishop of Ely, p. 416 of "Modern Skepticism." "The more we contemplate Christ's character," writes the Unitarian, Channing, "the more we shall be impressed with its genuineness and reality" ("Works," vol. IV., pp. 7, sqq.). Cf. Matthew Arnold's remarks, "Literature and Dogma," pp. 100, sqq.

what he believed without regard to consequences."*

He revealed, with pitiless accuracy, the hidden motives of those who came to him. Like a wise physician, he never flattered nor deceived his followers; he exposed the radical sinfulness of the human heart by showing the secret sources of its sin; he laid bare the festering core of the hidden ulcer. He warns his disciples of what they must expect in following him; he reproves Simon Peter at the moment of his most fervent protestation of zeal as one who would be a traitor to his Master (John 13:37, 38). With equal impartiality he exposed the weakness of the woman of Samaria,† the covetousness of the rich young man,‡ the carnal appetite of the multitude who sought him not for his miracles, but for the loaves he gave them.§ In short, in whatever circumstances you find him, you cannot but recognize the inimitable features of One who is absolutely and without any abatement true.||

* Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 192. Even Strauss admits that "with a personality of such immeasurable historical effect as that of Jesus obviously was, there cannot be a question of adaptation, of playing a part" ("New Life," trans., I., 312).

† John 4:17.

‡ Matt. 19:21.

§ John 6:26.

|| Cf. Mark 10:18; Luke 14:26, 27. "The gospel . . . is a gospel of sincerity and simplicity" (Vaughan, "Characteristics of Christ's Teaching," p. 152). "Truth, absolute reality,

11. So far I have reminded you only of the general outline of Christ's sincerity as it is *implied* in the Gospel narratives. Professing to be (at the very least) a prophet of God; professing to be the bearer of a special message from him of whom even a heathen could say that "*truth* is His body and light is His shadow," He is known to have pronounced a series of moral discourses containing by universal consent the very highest maxims of virtue the world has ever heard.

Beginning with a series of beatitudes, in which He declares that "*the pure in heart* shall see God," we find him claiming, in all his subsequent words and actions, a special commission from God to lead men to truth.*

12. He proclaimed this mission at the imminent and continuous risk of misrepresentation, unpopularity, scorn, infamy, and prejudice. In delivering the truth he had to contend against the bitterest intolerance and the most persistent rancor. His death, as we shall presently see, was the direct consequence of his bold and unflinching utterance of the truth. Yet he never

is the realm of Christ" (Westcott on John 5:37.) Cf. his remarks, "Introduction to John," pp. 44., sqq.

* "If any one phase of our Lord's teaching can claim priority over others, it may well be that to which he himself gave prominence when he stood before Pilate and in solemn words proclaimed the purpose of his life, . . . 'that I should bear witness to the truth,' " etc.—Plumptre, "Boyle Lectures," p. 215.

toned down that utterance to suit the popular taste. He laid down his life for the truth.

Throughout his attitude is absolutely consistent. Relying upon the possession of the truth, secure in those divine credentials which truth will ever make manifest to the world, he never flinched from the task of delivering it.

This, I say, is *implied* in all his ministry.*

13. This much, at least, may be gathered from each and any of the three Synoptic Gospels. And this much of itself would suffice to give weight to the argument I am presenting to you.† But there yet remains the explicit wit-

* Cf. Row, "Moral Teaching of the New Testament" (S. P. C. K.), pp. 229, sqq. "Truth dwelt within [Christ] as the clearest of illuminations. . . . The conception of uncertainty is invariably wanting in his teaching." He "made the absolute appeal to truth the foundation of his moral teaching," etc. "The fanatical and ignorant . . . seem to think that the face of truth is full of dread. They are afraid to unveil her statue; they say, 'We will none of this dogma, none of that science.' The great and good . . . have no fears; . . . they know that the beaming countenance of the image of truth, raised by God Almighty, is the face of Jesus Christ."—Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 453.

† Cf. "Ecce Homo," 5th edit., Preface, pp. vii., sqq.; and Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 251. So Lacordaire, "Conférences" (English trans., 1875), p. 32: "Jesus Christ was sincere because he was a sublime intelligence. He was sincere because his heart was open to men as a sanctuary of tenderness and chastity; he was sincere because he possessed absolute certainty of himself, because he had faith in his doctrine, because he believed in himself. . . . Being sincere, he

ness of the author of the fourth Gospel; and having at the outset* reminded you that whatever hesitation might some few years ago have been felt in regard to the authenticity of this Gospel, such hesitation is altogether needless now, let us further observe that Christ is throughout St. John's Gospel presented to us as explicitly claiming to be the Truth itself in language we cannot explain away as metaphorical or enthusiastic.

14. In the particular incident we are now considering we see Christ arraigned before his Roman judge upon the charge of political conspiracy. Asked as to the charge, he declares himself to be a King, but a King whose sovereignty is not of this world. He now proceeds to enlarge upon this superhuman claim. He bases the fact of his kingship upon the essential supremacy of truth over the hearts and minds of men. Previous to this Christ had definitely claimed to be himself the Truth incarnate.†

believed what he said. Now he said that he was God; he declared this to his disciples, to his friends, to the people, to the supreme magistracy of his country: he was condemned, he died for that affirmation; therefore he believed that he was God. But he could not believe this if he were not God, because it is impossible to be deceived in such a matter as that of consciousness of one's own personality without being mad. Now Jesus Christ was not a madman; and he was sincere; therefore he was God."

* Lecture I., sects. 14, sqq.

† John 14: 6, "I am . . . the Truth."

And we find the evangelist declaring that "truth came by Jesus Christ."* And Christ tells the believing Jews that if they become indeed his disciples, "they shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free."†

And so, as Dr. Westcott in his Introduction to the Evangelist illustrates with rare discernment and his own profound scholarship, the whole message which St. John has to convey is the gradual self-revelation of Christ to his disciples as the very Truth of God.‡

15. And thus it is that at this moment "every sincere Christian bows to Jesus Christ as to an intellectual Master;" and, moreover, "as not merely a teacher of truth," but as "the absolute Truth itself. . . . High above the claims of human teachers," it has been truly said, "the tremendous self-assertion of Jesus echoes on from age to age, 'I am the Truth.'"§ He knows and announces himself to be a universal and infallible teacher in spiritual things.

He is spoken of by St. John as the true Light,

* John 1 : 17.

† John 8 : 32.

‡ Westcott, "Introduction to John," p. xlv. ; cf. Notes on John 18 : 37, 38, etc.

§ Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 126. Cf. Lacordaire, "Conférences" (English trans.), p. 253: "Did Jesus say, I am the inventor of truth? No, gentlemen; he said, I am the Truth. . . . I am the Truth of all times and places, . . . that Truth which is the first and the last," etc.

shining in the darkness of human error and sin ; and it needs but slight consideration to connect this with the self-proclamation of Christ as the Light of the world—truth in the realms of thought, truth in the sphere of action ; and it is but a step farther in the same direction when the same evangelist declares in his epistle that God, and God alone, is Light, and in him, and in him alone, is no shadow of darkness.*

16. Thus in the Synoptic Gospels by implication, and in St. John by distinct and open avowal, Jesus Christ claims the credential of absolute, uncompromising truth. Throughout the entire Gospel history He speaks in language that peremptorily demands the absolute submission of all who follow him—the submission, moral and intellectual, of every individual soul, not to his doctrine only, but *to himself*, to his person. Here, as in the case of all his other claims, “Christianity is Christ.”† The truth of the former stands or falls with the literal and absolute truth of Christ himself.

17. Now, in the face of that primary axiom of morality which I suggested for our guidance

* Cf. Stier, “Words of the Lord Jesus,” VII., 358–376. Olshausen on “The Gospels,” IV., 100–102. Christ, by the admission of Mr. Matthew Arnold, preached the Messiah as “a man who tells you the truth which he has heard of God” (“Literature and Dogma,” p. 101).

† “Modern Skepticism,” p. 427.

at the outset, what are we to say in view of this astonishing claim of Jesus Christ?

If the very first essential in a good man's life is his entire sincerity; if even a pagan moralist could perceive* that he is a "braggart who lays claim to qualities which he does not really possess; . . . that a man who loves the truth, and who is truthful in unimportant matters, will be all the more truthful in matters that are important;" if veracity be in truth the distinguishing mark between a good man and a rogue—then surely there is no avoiding the appalling alternative either that Jesus Christ was verily and indeed all that he claimed to be, or else that he was that which in this place Christian lips cannot bring themselves to frame.†

* Aristotle, "Nic. Eth." (Grant), IV. 7, pp. 130, sqq.

† "What is it that the modern theorists ask us to believe? . . . That eighteen hundred years ago there lived in the most despised village of the most despised province of a conquered land a man, . . . unlearned and ignorant and not free from sin, . . . who, after having lived thirty years in the deepest obscurity as a village carpenter, came forth for three years to preach a doctrine which is often self-contradictory, always defective, exaggerated, unpractical; and that when this fantastic pietist, half dreamer, half deceiver, made claims so violently opposed to his own clearest teachings that he suffered a slave's death for treason and blasphemy, his followers grossly falsified the events of his ordinary life, . . . though they were men whose lives and teaching showed they 'would rather die than lie,' " etc.—Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," pp. 86, 87.

18. Such, at any rate, was the only alternative in front of those who first accused him. They with strict logical propriety did not shrink from the full responsibility of the stupendous dilemma.

Fully alive to the real magnitude of his astounding pretensions, they condemned him to death for propagating a lie in the name of God; their hostility had long since shown itself in this direction: "We stone thee for a lie, because thou, being a man, makest thyself God."*

Referring to "Supernatural Religion" (II., 486), where it is asserted that "the disciples piously distorted" the teaching of Jesus, it has well been urged, "We are to believe that disciples capable of receiving . . . the highest system of morality attainable by humanity, in the light of which they lived and for the truth of which they died, 'piously distorted' that system. . . . We are to believe, on the one hand, that 'no supernatural halo can brighten its spiritual beauty' (II., 489), but to hold, on the other hand, that the apostles' testimony is full of falsehoods;" that "the Bible is morally true, yet full of wilful lies" ("The Supernatural in Nature," pp. 11, 12).

* John 10:33. Cf. Riggenbach's words (quoted by Auberlen, "Vorlesungen über das Leben Jesu," p. 668): "If Jesus were not, in truth, the Son of God, co-Regent with God and Judge of the world, but had only made himself so, it was the most flagrant and impious assault upon the majesty of God that insane arrogance had ever attempted." It may, of course, be objected either (*a*) that Christ himself never made the claims with which our argument credits him. In this case, of course, *cadit quæstio*. But, without denying the credibility of all historical evidence whatever, it cannot be doubted that Christ *substantially* claimed to be divine; or (*b*) that he was laboring under the *delusion* of fanaticism, etc.

They killed him, in short, because they saw he was either *too good* for human society or *too depraved*; and they chose the second of the two alternatives as the readiest solution of the difficulty. They preferred to stigmatize him as a liar in the name of God rather than confess him to be verily and indeed the Truth of God in human flesh—which was what he claimed.*

19. We cannot wonder at their choice.

But I would entreat you, O my friends, face that alternative *yourselves*.

If you are prepared to say that he who claimed to teach men to love one another and to fear God, taught them, by the whole tenor of

Without discussing this, it is enough for our present purpose to remember that a *lie* is not *in fact* the less a *lie* because it *appears to its utterer* in the guise of truth. Further, the mere "man" who could be thus "deceived" is at any rate unworthy of being made an *intellectual* master or exemplar.

* Of the general aim of a well-known recent work ("Supernatural Religion") Prof. Birks significantly remarks that it is "to prove that a great Teacher, who calls himself 'the Truth,' ought rather to be styled by the opposite name, inasmuch as by false claims to a nature he did not possess and to a commission he had not received, he has really been the parent and author of the most extensive . . . fraud on the credulity of mankind which has ever been practised since the beginning of time, when we take into account the number of those who have been thus deceived and their intellectual eminence, so that the history of mankind for eighteen hundred years will have been turned into a gigantic mass of credulity, deception, and falsehood."—Birks, "Supernatural Religion," p. 9; cf. sqq., esp. p. 33.

his life, to trifle with the inviolate sanctity of truth ; if the most rudimentary instincts of truthfulness were habitually and intentionally traversed by One who is yet admitted by Unitarians such as Channing,* and skeptics like Mill, to be the most elevated example of truth and of virtue the world has ever seen ;† if the canon of rectitude in word and action has been indeed thus distorted by One who claimed to fulfil the righteousness of the Jewish law ; if you can bring yourself to believe that He who went about doing good, he whose humility and self-sacrifice you profess to admire, could thus deliberately tamper with the first and most sacred law of our being ;‡ if he who in other respects

* "Works," II., 55 : "When I trace the unaffected majesty which runs through the life of Jesus, and see him never falling below his sublime claims amid poverty and scorn and in his last agony, I have a feeling of the reality of his character which I cannot express. I feel that the Jewish carpenter could no more have conceived and sustained this character under motives of imposture than an infant's arm could repeat the deeds of Hercules."

† Whereas, in considering the real issues involved, "the choice really lies between the hypothesis of conscious and culpable insincerity and the belief that Jesus speaks literal truth and must be taken at his word."—"Bampton Lect.," p. 203.

‡ For an able exposure of M. Renan's untenable position in attempting to discriminate between the Oriental and European standards of falsehood and truth as an "apology" for Christ's "innocent artifices," see R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," I., 270, etc. See also Principal Tulloch's "Lectures on M. Renan's Vie de Jésus," *passim*.

was perfectly obedient to the will of God was thus a lifelong rebel against God's first law, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me," and against that other law which says, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain ;"* if he who was stern only in denouncing the falsehood of the Pharisee was thus himself fatally wounded by the radical falsehood of his own pretensions ; if the moral sense which God has implanted in us all was thus blunted in the living example of One whose whole preaching was intended to penetrate to the innermost recesses of human action and to purify the most sacred well-springs of human affection—then indeed those Jews were right.†

* How hopelessly the humanitarian theories break down at important junctures may be seen in Mr. Edward Clodd's explanation of Christ's attitude at the Jewish tribunal. "Let them do their worst" is supposed to be his soliloquy. "Die? He could die but once, and in such a dying was secured the life of the truth to which he had witnessed ; acquittal could be had only at the cost of denying all that in life he accounted dear" ("Jesus of Nazareth," p. 346). Thus Mr. Clodd attributes *deliberate falsehood* to Christ—falsehood too of a kind the most awfully blasphemous, on a matter affecting the most sacred interests of humanity. Yet this is the same Jesus of whom Mr. Clodd elsewhere (p. 244) says that "his work was to add without measure to the sum of human *goodness*," that his life was one "whose loveliness *and faithfulness* (?) were undimmed in death (p. 354), and "whose influence for good in this world cannot well be overrated" (p. 231).

† By way of a single illustration of the mythical or ration-

It was not fitting that such a one should live.

20. But there is no intermediate standing-ground between his condemnation as One who had called God to witness to a lifelong fraud intended to mislead the whole world of posterity—no standing-ground between this, the positivistic theories in their direct application to particular portions of the Gospel narrative, it may be well to recall M. Renan's treatment of the resurrection of Lazarus (John 11). M. Renan admits indeed that "it is *probable* then that this marvel was not one of those miracles that are entirely legendary; . . . in other words, that there *did* happen at Bethany something which was looked upon as a resurrection" ("Vie de Jésus," pp. 359, 360, 6th edit.). But to explain this admitted "something," M. Renan is obliged to suggest that "the conscience of Jesus, by the fault of men and not by his own, had lost something of its original clearness." And the explanation is: "Perhaps the ardent desire of supporting the divine character of Christ's mission led these impassioned friends of his 'beyond all bounds.' Perhaps Lazarus, still pale from his illness, *had had himself surrounded with bandages as a dead man and shut up in his family tomb!* Jesus [deliberately conniving at this blasphemous fraud!] desired to see once again him whom he loved, and the stone being removed, Lazarus came forth," etc. On this, it has well been said, M. Renan "asks us to believe that One 'who will never be surpassed' . . . lent himself to a wretched trickery, and that the weak and foolish creatures who took part in it went forth to win an unbelieving world to faith and righteousness and love."—Cazenove, "Christian Remembrancer," No. 123, p. 234. This crucial instance of the failure of the legendary hypothesis is also insisted upon by P. Schaff, "Christ and Christianity," p. 30. And see the "Discussion" between Mrs. Wilkie and the Secularist, by Mr. A. B. Moss, on "Was Jesus an Impostor?" (Watts & Co., 84 Fleet Street, 1885), pp. 17, 36, 65.

tion of the Jews who reviled him on his cross in the agonies of death as a deceiver, and the position of men who, convinced by the logic of facts which cannot be explained away, know and are sure that "heaven and earth shall pass away," but that Christ's "words shall not pass away," and who, in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, avow their profound conviction, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief;" for thou, and thou alone, art verily and indeed the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

III.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO FULFIL THE LAW
OF MOSES AS THE PREDICTED MES-
SIAH ; AND IS CONDEMNED BY THE
LAW AS A LAW-BREAKER.

“THINK NOT THAT I AM COME TO DESTROY
THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS: I AM NOT COME TO
DESTROY, BUT TO FULFIL.”—MATTHEW 5:17.

“WE HAVE A LAW, AND BY OUR LAW HE
OUGHT TO DIE.”—JOHN 19:7.

"Jesus Christ was undoubtedly the very last sort of Messiah whom the Jews expected."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"The great value of historical criticism is that it makes the Old Testament more real to us. Christianity can never separate itself from its historical basis on the religion of Israel; the revelation of God in Christ cannot be divorced from the earlier revelation on which our Lord built."—PROF. ROBERTSON SMITH.

"Would you deny that Jesus Christ has verified the Messianic idea in his person; that he was a Jew of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David, and the founder of the Catholic Church upon the double ruin of the synagogue and idolatry?"—LACORDAIRE.

"Christianity would be unintelligible without Judaism."—MAX MULLER.

"Either. . . Jesus Christ . . . is God, or . . . mankind is a victim to a fatal illusion. . . . If Jesus Christ were not God, Mahometanism would be a masterpiece of piety in comparison with Christianity; for the votaries of Mahomet did not worship him as God."—ABBÉ FREPPEL.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF MESSIAHSHIP IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA.

1. WE are now confronted by another factor in the premises of the great dilemma.

But before examining it, let us consider the bearing of the facts we have already discussed.

We have seen, then, first of all, that the Founder of Christianity is a Person who advances the extraordinary claim of entire moral innocence. With a self-assertion which nothing but extravagant delusion or blind conceit could condone in any human teacher, he claims to be entirely devoid of the minutest taint of moral guilt.

Not only by direct avowal, but still more by the whole tenor of his life, he asserts his absolute sinlessness.

2. This claim, we saw, was one which a mere man has never yet ventured seriously to urge. And yet this Person never flinched from the full responsibility of a claim so unpardonable if not warranted in fact.

This, the first fact, is absolutely undeniable. The documents in which it stands recorded are now admitted by even hostile critics to be gen-

uine histories; so that it is beyond question that, on whatever grounds, Christ did assert with the utmost emphasis his entire and perfect sinlessness.

And further, we saw that this startling pretension has never been seriously disputed, except by those who utterly refused to face the possibility of his absolute truthfulness in making it.

3. But we found, also, that this gradually became fatal to the temporal well-being of Christ himself.

Although his worst enemies, from the commencement to the end of his extraordinary life, failed to convince him of any moral guilt whatever, while they admitted—as Mill and Renan, Strauss and Rousseau, Channing and Schleiermacher still admit—that he was practically a faultless man; yet, notwithstanding, the Jews stand convicted of the sublime inconsistency of crucifying him as a felon and a criminal—as one who was pronounced too depraved to live, while a Barabbas was pronounced too good to die.

4. The real explanation of their deed is that they had no other alternative. They killed him in pure self-defence. Finding it impossible to fasten upon him any criminal accusation, they yet feared to let him live, and therefore brought against him the unanswerable accusation of

blasphemy. They knew that none but God may dare to claim freedom from all sin. Sooner, therefore, than face the tremendous alternative of his divinity, they hastened to kill him outright.

They were perfectly right, perfectly logical, in so doing, if they denied his Godhead.

5. And that was the dilemma in which we found ourselves, my hearers.

As a mere man Christ was guilty not only of blasphemy of the most daring character; he was guilty also of utter insincerity, for he wilfully and undisguisedly led people to trust in him as God; he was guilty of self-seeking and arrogance; his life was as it were "honey-combed" with gigantic deceptions and spotted with sundry moral blemishes which cannot be explained away without admitting his divinity.

6. From this dilemma there is only one escape, to treat him as the Jews treated him, to denounce him as a blasphemer and to send him to a felon's execution.

No prejudice, no timid apprehension of consequences to Christianity at large, can excuse any reluctance to accept this alternative in the man who, after due consideration of all the momentous problems involved in the admission, deliberately declares that Jesus Christ may not claim the worship of humanity.

7. In strict accord with this conclusion was

the verdict of honesty upon the thoughts we considered in our second lecture. We then examined the credentials of Christ as regarding his claim to be the Truth. We faced the alternative of his falsity. We tried to argue ourselves into believing that such a one as he could dare to do what is condemned in the lowest criminals in our jails ; that is, to call God to witness to a lie by which the whole fabric of his life would, on the presumption of his untrustworthiness, have been undermined. We tried to persuade ourselves that he, this Jesus, has sweetened the lives of millions of men and women by a lie sealed with the seal of God ; that he not only suffered death for a lie, but deliberately persuaded his disciples to give up all and follow—a liar ; that his resurrection was consequently a monstrous fabrication of men who had nothing whatever to gain, but everything, even life itself, to lose, by propagating such a delusion ; finally, that all the victories of Christianity, political, social, intellectual, have been won by the sword of falsehood ; that in the emphatic words of Dean Mansel,* he from whom

* "Bampton Lectures," p. 174. "Taking all these [evidences] . . . into full consideration, are you prepared to affirm, as the result of the whole inquiry, that Jesus of Nazareth was an impostor, or an enthusiast, or a mythical figment, and his disciples crafty and designing, or well-meaning but deluded men? . . . Here is the issue which the wavering disciple is bound seriously to consider," etc. (*Ibid.*, pp. 172, 173).

this alleged "fable" of Christianity came "has turned the civilized world from darkness to light with a lie in his right hand."

8. This is the first presentment of the great dilemma—a sinless Christ executed as a malefactor; the Truth incarnate crucified as a liar in the name of God!

9. So far, however, the argument, however startling, is very far from complete.

Granted that he is indeed the one sinless Son of God; granted that we may admire him as a unique phenomenon in the world's history; yet, thus baldly stated, the tremendous truth of the Incarnation is shorn of its true significance.

There, indeed, before our eyes, is *a* sinless one, *a* God—for the admission may, nay, *must* be made, even upon the grounds of his innocence—but whence and why and who is this God in human flesh?

10. How comes it that he is there—there in an obscure Oriental country, surrounded with the grassy slopes of Palestine? What is there in him, or in the circumstances in which we find him, to explain the phenomenon of his presence among the sons of men at this particular time, in this particular place?

My hearers, we have so far approached the life of Christ as it might have been led in London

or in Paris, in Athens or in Rome, at any age in the world's history.

11. We have gazed at him as it were as the central figure in some noble picture; we have gazed at him, and our eyes have not taken in the surrounding details: we have as it were detached him from the circumstances in which he lived, we have separated between his innocence and the guilty world in which that innocence appeared.

Obviously, then, the portrait, however vivid, is lacking in human interest even yet; there is something wanting to bring the portrait home to our hearts as the portrait of one who is very near and dear to us.

12. That defect we shall gradually supply, let us hope, in the process of the argument. To-day we have the first glimpse of the background that makes the portrait solid and real to us.

Let us remember, then, that Christ came, not as a *Deus ex Machina*—a God suddenly and without warning sent to intervene in the mystery of human life; not as a sign or prodigy wholly unconnected with the past or future history of the human race; not as an apparition suddenly flashed upon the curtain of the world from the apparatus of an unknown and unknowable operator; not as the figure of a hero or a

saint—alighting by haphazard upon one corner of the stage of life's great drama—incontinently appearing, suddenly vanishing, as by a random freak of the author's masterly mind.*

13. No! Jesus Christ came not thus unexpected by the human family. It is not thus that our Father has deluded his sons and daughters.

It was as the long-looked-for fulfilment of a divine purpose that Christ appeared. He claimed to be not only a sinless one, but the sinless One—the one victim without spot or blemish that the sin-stained conscience of humanity had long yearned to look upon.†

* "Christianity came not at an arbitrary moment, but at a crisis when 'all things were now ready'" (Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection" p. 63). This is fully recognized by critics who yet fail to gather the true significance of the admission. See, e. g., Clodd, "Jesus of Nazareth," who devotes about half of his work to the task of tracing the history of the Jews, with a view to the right appreciation of the historical phenomenon presented in the life of our Lord (cf. pp. 87, 88). "Christianity," writes Prof. Max Müller, "would be unintelligible without Judaism." (Lecture on missions in "Chips from a German Workshop," IV., 253.) "There is undoubtedly in the Old Testament the germ of Christianity."—Matthew Arnold, "Literature and Dogma," p. 80.

† Cf. Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," I., 328, etc., 391, sqq.; Humphry, "Hulsean Lectures," especially Lects. II., III., and IV.; Merivale, "Conversion of the Roman Empire," pp. 138, sqq., 238-244, etc.; Mosheim, "Ecclesiastical History," pp. 7-17, 28-32, etc.; Eaton, "Permanence of Christianity," p. 180, *passim*: and especially chaps. 7 and 8 of Row's "The Jesus of the Evangelists" (pp. 85-109). For the whole subject, see Dean Milman's "History of Christianity," *passim*, especially

14. We cannot understand the claim of Christ which I am now about to set before you without a moment's survey of the relationship between Judaism and the world at large. For what the conscience of the heathen world had longed for and dimly guessed was realized in Israel.*

The most obvious fact connected with our Lord is that he was a Jew; and it is as a Jew that he claims to fulfil the laws and the prophecies of his nation.†

Now, assuming (for the present) that this claim can be substantiated, let us think what it entails.

15. It is then a fact which no skeptic can
Book I., chaps. 1 and 2* (pp. 1-108), and Book II., ch. 2. (pp. 377-424).

* "Christianity must be placed in intimate connection with the divine discipline of the world in former ages if we are to understand it . . . Our Lord and his apostles came to declare to the Gentiles the God whom they ignorantly worshipped. . . . There have been attempts in all ages to separate Christianity from Judaism and Hellenism; but to carry out such an attempt is not to interpret Christianity, but to construct a new religion. . . Christianity was bound up with promises and blessings by which the Jewish people had been moulded through many centuries. It answered to wants of which the Gentiles had become conscious through long periods of noble effort and bitter desolation."—Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 63.

† "The Jew . . . brought a new life into the heart of the world. . . Centuries of thought had not advanced one step nearer to the solution of problems . . . which . . . Jesus, the Jew, solved."—Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 498.

deny, that the Jews have a very extraordinary history among the nations of the world.* Alone among all others, they believe themselves to be destined to give to the world a Messiah, an anointed victim, a royal head, a sacrificial Priest, by whom and in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed.†

For hundreds of years before Christ was born they had believed themselves to be a nation chosen out of all others for this great purpose—that in them, in their Messiah, the unseen and

* "The Jews, your Majesty," is the well-known reply of his chaplain to a skeptical prince who required him to give a summary evidence of the truth of Christianity. (Cf. Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 97). "Of the Mosaic Law and its connection with Judaism and universal history, Ewald says, "It is certain that unless the very greatest thing in all history is to be ascribed to accident, [Moses] was one of the very greatest of men," etc. (vol. II., p. 25). See also Lacordaire's sermon on the "Preëxistence of Jesus Christ," in which the Messianic ideas are admirably elaborated ("Conférences," English transl., pp. 136-173). For one of the latest expositions of "the Messianic Idea in the Old Testament," see Dr. Barry's "Boyle Lecture" on "The Manifold Witness for Christ" (1880, ch. 6., pp. 101, sqq).

† "In what is verily the moral centre of the world, midway between the principal seats of ancient civilization, God exemplified, upon a single people, the restoring and exalting process under which humanity . . . should be cured of all its guilty wanderings and infatuations" (Hardwick, "Christ and other Masters," p. 56). "Un peuple étrange est apparu au centre même de l'ancien monde, profondément séparé de tout ce qui l'entoure," etc. (Pressensé, "Jésus Christ," p. 60).

eternal God of all the earth would make himself known as a God of love, a God of truth, a God of saving.*

16. It is further equally undeniable that in this singular faith they were supported by the facts of history.

We have in the Old Testament a historical literature of a continuous kind, which, in point of fact, has no parallel elsewhere in the world.

"Small though their land was, a mere strip of country in a corner of the vast continent, and insignificant as the people were by the side of the mighty empires of the East and West, there sprang out of them a succession of historians, of psalmists and of prophets, which was absolutely unique;" and by them "was built up a system of religious thought which, for sublimity of conception and moral elevation, immeasurably surpassed all contemporary systems. It was there alone that the one eternal, ever-living God was set forth as the Maker and Ruler of all things, the infinitely righteous and holy One."†

* That this is the case is too widely admitted to need illustration. The most hostile critics cannot explain away the Messianic expectations of the Jews. "Through a long series of misfortunes," writes Mr. Mackay, "the Jews had been constantly supported by the expectation of a Great Deliverer," etc. ("Rise and Progress of Christianity," p. 15). So, cf. Greg, "Creed of Christendom," I., 86, 89.

† Brownlow Maitland, "The Argument from Prophecy," p. 45. For the whole subject, cf. Milman, "History of the

17. And when we find in Israel a moral consciousness purer and truer than even in Greece and Rome, it is to *its Law* that the nation owes its superiority.

In its substance that law is of eternal and world-wide importance. It was, as it were, the great objective conscience of mankind. "Simple as the Ten Commandments may appear," says a German critic, "there is nothing in the whole literature of the nations that can be compared with them for the purity and universality of their contents."*

18. In the very forefront of their faith was found this code of laws, and upon it their faith was built. Very early in the history of their race had God, as they believed, committed his will to their patriarchs, their lawgivers, and their prophets; and it was in strict obedience to his will that they relied upon his favor and blessing.

In fact it is perfectly clear that the leading principle of the Mosaic Law is its theocratic character. This principle is the very groundwork of all the Jewish polity. "The Mosaic Law seeks the basis of its polity, first, in the relationship of each individual to God, and through Jews," especially Book III. (vol. I., pp. 123-188). Cf. Hengstenberg, "The Kingdom of God," transl., pp. 313, etc.

* Luthardt, "Moral Truths of Christianity," p. 53. Cf. Auberlen ("Die Göttliche Offenbarung," transl., p. 119),

God to his countrymen.”* Its fundamental assertion is the absolute and unlimited sovereignty of Jehovah; and to this is referred every detail of its legislative action. “Through the act of giving the law,” says Prof. Auberlen, “Jehovah comes personally before the people as their King and Lord.”†

19. Now it was as a Jew that the Sinless One appeared on earth. He appeared, moreover, not only as a Jew, but he claimed preëminence among his brethren in a way we dare not misapprehend.‡ He claimed to be the “Christ” of

“The Decalogue . . . is acknowledged by all civilized nations as the best summary of the moral law.” Cf. Hardwick, “Christ and other Masters,” Part I., ch. 3.

“I imagine that everything good, in the legislation of modern times, has had its origin in the Sinaitic Laws of Moses.”—Sir G. B. Airy, K. C. B., “Notes on the Earlier Hebrew Scriptures,” p. 93. Cf. Pressensé, “Jésus Christ, son Temps, sa Vie, son Œuvre,” pp. 60–80. So Hengstenberg, “History of the Kingdom of God under the Old Testament,” (transl.), pp. 327, etc.

* Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” vol. II., p. 73.

† “Die Göttliche Offenbarung” (transl.), 136, etc. Colani, “Jésus Christ et les Croyances Messianiques,” p. 3: “La grande originalité des Israélites consiste précisément en ceci, qu’ils ont cru avec une égale énergie à l’unité de l’Être Divin et à sa prédilection pour leur race,” etc. Cf. Westcott, “Gospel of the Resurrection,” ch. I., sect. 22 and *passim*.

‡ Even De Wette allows that “the entire Old Testament is a great prophecy, a great type of him who was to come and has come” (Bähr, “Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus,” I., 16, note; quoted by Hardwick, “Christ and other Masters,” p. 59).

God.* He claimed, in short, to be a perfect Jew—a Jew who, alone of all his race, had fulfilled those myriad requirements of rite and ceremony, type and ordinance, which were embodied in the “Law and the Prophets.” Nay, more: he claimed to supersede the law by thus fulfilling its requirements;† he proclaimed himself to be the End and Object, the Substance and the Essence, of each and every Aaronic and Levitical ordinance. Even further still, he claimed to be a legislator himself, a legislator of whom Moses had been a shadow and type. Whereas Moses had been sent, Christ announced, “I am come to fulfil the law and the prophets.” He places himself before the world as the actual fulfilment of the righteousness to which the Mosaic law was the divine witness. This, and nothing less, is implied in the utterance upon his cross, “It is finished.”

20. And so it is that throughout his teaching,

* “The ‘Christ’ is a title which has a distinct and definite meaning. It means him of whom Moses . . . did write,” etc.—Birks, “Supernatural Religion,” ch. 21, p. 199.

† The non-finality of the Hebraistic legislation “is apparent,” writes Hardwick (“Christ and other Masters,” p. 58), “from its own sacred books. . . . The prophets . . . carry on men’s thoughts beyond a mere ritual service,” etc. “Yet the kernel of that ancient system . . . was imperishable. . . . The law, in all its breadth and depth, is tributary to the gospel; . . . the Saviour came, not to destroy, but to transfigure and complete.”

in place of a blind and servile allegiance to the letter of the Mosaic law, Christ taught the freedom of an inspiration which was to overpower the disciples with loving enthusiasm. While treating the Old Testament Scriptures with the utmost reverence,* he deliberately set aside much that had hitherto been held as sacred, and introduced a method of interpretation which at once horrified and scandalized the cautious, scrupulous, timid, letter-worshipping legalists and Rabbis.†

21. His claim to exercise paramount authority over the Jewish law is well illustrated in his teaching with regard to the Sabbath. "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath,"‡ was his only apology for declining to enforce or otherwise modify the Rabbinical rules for the strict observance of the day.§ And in this connection it has well been said that "even an attentive reader of the Gospels will be surprised to find how large a portion of the enmity and

* Cf. Mark 10 : 3 ; Luke 16 : 29 ; John 5 : 45, 46, etc.

† Cf. "Ecce Homo," *passim*, especially pp. 182, sqq. So too, Auberlen, "Die Göttliche Offenbarung" (transl.), p. 122.

‡ Luke 6 : 5. See F. D. Maurice, "Lectures on St. Luke." Lecture VII. Christ's "difference with the Pharisees respecting the Sabbath was . . . radical and essential. If they were right, . . . He was utterly . . . wrong ; a subverter of God's law, a blasphemer of His Name" (p. 82).

§ "Gospel for the Nineteenth Century," p. 42.

opposition which our Lord excited turned upon this point alone."*

22. So, too, in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord takes certain maxims of the Levitical law, and at once interprets and supersedes them by a precept touching the very depths of human life. Thus was the law "the schoolmaster to bring men to Christ;"† thus was Christ "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."‡ He gave expression to the weighty things of the law, which the Pharisees and legalists had overlooked in their zeal for the minor trivialities of ceremony and ritual.§

The law of Moses had been written on tables of stone; the law of Christ was to be written on the fleshly tables of the heart. The Christian was to have the power of making laws for himself—laws adapted for every contingency and every circumstance.||

* Farrar, "Life of Christ," vol. I., p. 433. The instances he quotes are Matt. 12 : 1, sqq.; Mark 2 : 23-28 ; 3 : 1-6; Luke 6 : 1-11 ; 13 : 14-17 ; 14 : 1-6; John 5 : 10, sqq.; 7 : 23 ; 9 : 14. For the whole question, see Art. "Sabbath," in Smith's "Bible Dictionary," and authorities there cited.

† Gal. 3 : 24, and Lightfoot's note, *in loc.*

‡ Rom. 10 : 4.

§ For a vivid exposition of the quibbles of the legalists, see Farrar, "Life of Christ," ch. 31. Cf. Smith's "Bible Dictionary," Arts. "Pharisees," etc., and authorities there quoted. Stier, "Words of the Lord Jesus" (transl.), vol. I., 143, etc.

|| Cf. Schlegel's "Philosophy of History," Lecture 10, pp.

23. Further, it is important to bear in mind the authoritative attitude Christ consistently assumes in all his legislative teaching. The people themselves were not slow to remark the difference between him and their ordinary teachers.* He does not condescend to recommend his doctrine by argument; he simply announces his own inherent claim upon the obedience of his hearers: "But *I* say unto you." This is his only apology for the authority he assumes. If it be urged that this is only the prophetic style affected by Jewish rabbis, it should be remembered that the prophets invariably shelter their own authority behind the sanction of Almighty God upon their mission. "Thus saith the Lord," was the warrant of their authority. "Verily, verily, I say unto you," is Christ's only self-justification in assuming the loftiest critical powers

284, sqq. So Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 287: "The Christian Law is no mere reproduction of the Sinaitic. The New Law of Christendom is distinguished [in St. James] by epithets which define its essential superiority to the Law of the Synagogue and which suggest the true dignity of its Founder. It is νόμος τῆς ἐλευθερίας . . . It demands the living energy of inward motives, whose soul and essence is love. . . . It is further . . . the 'royal Law,' νόμος βασιλικός. . . . and to obey is to own Christ's legislative supremacy. . . . It is 'the perfect Law,' νόμος τέλειος. It is above human criticism. It will not, like the Mosaic Law, be completed by another revelation," etc.

* Matt. 7: 29; he "taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

towards the divine law which he revised and modified.*

24. So, too, without attempting to enter minutely upon this mysterious subject, it must be remembered that Christ appropriates to himself incidents connected with various stages in the early history of the Jews. The brazen serpent,† the manna,‡ the water from the rock,§ the fiery pillar,|| the paschal lamb,¶ these are instances of types and figures transferred by Christ to himself as their true and only fulfilment.

And thus it was that even before he had fully entered on his ministry, before he had wrought a single miracle, one of his earliest disciples perceived that he it was "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,"** and witnessed

* Cf. Stier, "Words of the Lord Jesus," vol. I. p. 153. "In opposition to [the Talmudical formula of teaching adopted by the learned caste], and rooting out all traditions and precepts of men which God hath not planted, stands the mighty *Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν*, which is one with the *יהיה אומר* or *נאם יהיה* of the law and the prophets."

† John 3:14. See Westcott, *in loc.*, and pp. 63, 64.

‡ John 6:31, 58, etc.

§ John 4:10; 7:38.

|| John 8:12. (See Westcott's note.)

¶ "Each of the three Evangelists relates, St. John alone omits to relate, the institution of the Last Supper. There distinctly Christ presents himself . . . as the Great Sacrifice, the Antitypical Paschal Lamb," etc.—Bishop of Ely, in "Modern Scepticism," p. 422.

** John 1:45.

to the fact that the law of Moses contained the shadow of those good things of which the substance was revealed in Christ.*

25. And Christ himself does not disown the responsibility of such witness as this. His attitude towards the Scriptures is remarkable enough.

He assigns to the whole of the Jewish Scriptures a distinct and peculiar function as towards himself. "Search the Scriptures; . . . they . . . testify of me:"† meaning, ye search in the outward letter for that which you can only find in me; and to me, he continues, "ye will not come, that ye might have" that eternal "life" which the outward letter cannot reveal.

It was "of me," he says later, that "Moses wrote:"‡ meaning, "I am the essential subject of the law and the prophets;" so that, "had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye be-

* Cf. Prof. Robertson Smith's Edinburgh and Glasgow Lectures, "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," pp. 312, sqq. (Black, 1881).

† John 5:39, 40. Cf. John 10:35; Luke 22:37; Matt. 26:53, 54.

‡ John 5:46. So, after his resurrection, Christ's first message revealed this aspect of his mission: "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning Me," etc., Luke 24:44, sqq.

lieve my words?" If they failed to seize the living principle by which the law was inspired, how should they receive the teaching of him who inspired it?

26. It would be interesting, if time allowed, to dwell upon this subject, and illustrate at greater length the claim of Christ to fulfil the law of Moses. We might enter upon the whole field of the typology of the Mosaic law; we might see how, in every case, "the literal requirements of Leviticus were fulfilled and done away in Christ: how they fell off, like the husks of swelling seed or like the blossoms of setting fruit, and how their spiritual and moral meaning remains and is fruitful for ever . . . under the genial influence of the gospel."*

But all this must be set apart for separate treatment; in the meantime, let us realize, for our present purpose, the full bearing of the facts we have considered.

27. The Jews, looking only to the letter of their law, saw in Christ one who, while in all respects reverencing the Scripture, attending upon the Jewish synagogue services, submitting to circumcision, and otherwise proving his perfect submission to the law of Moses, yet delib-

* Wordsworth, "Introduction to Leviticus," p. 7. For a full treatment of this subject, see Fairbairn, "Typology of Scripture."

erately and "wantonly," as they thought, broke many of the details of it. Thus confronted by the paradox of tremendous claims to be perfect, on the one side, and equally daring acts in which he plainly showed that he regarded the laws of Moses as in certain ways obsolete and incomplete, they could do nothing else than condemn him as a law-breaker. Horrified at his "sacrilegious" boldness, they were dismayed at his spotless moral integrity; and thus adding the charge of sacrilege to that of blasphemy, they spilled the innocent blood of a stainless Victim and released Barabbas, the robber and the murderer.

28. Again, I say, we are face to face with the same tremendous dilemma as before. If God has spoken to the world by that wondrous people, the Jews; if all the anticipations of Gentile philosophy are but a faint echo of that trumpet note of prophecy which sounds along the Jewish history; if, as the fulfilment of these anticipations and the fulfilment of these prophecies, Christ could claim to have fulfilled the law of Moses—surely now we begin to see that he is even more than a merely sinless One—we shall suspect that his blood was shed to do that which the blood of bulls and goats could never do, namely, to wash away the guilt of human sin.

29. If it be true that he fulfils the law as its first and only teacher and performer, he stands

to the world at large in a relationship we dare not overlook. He becomes the righteous one who offers himself in our stead, as the great atoning Sacrifice for our guilt in having broken the law of God. In him, in his death, is realized by the sinner the true use of the law, which was to convince men of the unapproachable holiness of God and the deadly destructiveness of sin.

30. But if otherwise; if the holy Scriptures of the Jewish nation have, in reality, been lightly esteemed by him who professed to fulfil them; if in all that sinless life there is a vein of frivolous trifling with the solemn and awful teaching of the Mosaic law; if, in daring to denounce the literalism of the Pharisees, he was seeking to excuse his own sacrilegious tampering with the most august and purest code of laws the world has ever seen—then surely we must again start back from Christ horrified and appalled; horrified to find an impious impostor beneath the mask of a pious and majestic lawgiver; appalled at the daring blasphemy which led him to claim a higher position than Abraham or Moses or Isaiah in regard to the Jewish Scriptures.

31. The dilemma is again before you: utter self-surrender to Him who could say, "Before Abraham was, I AM;" or indignant repudiation

of any part with the rightly crucified Galilean impostor. Which alternative will you accept? Choose ye. If Christ be God, humbly follow him, obey him, live in him. If he be only man, away with him from the earth, for the centuries have been built upon a lie!

IV.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO BE A KING AND IS CONDEMNED AS A TRAITOR.

“WE FOUND THIS FELLOW PERVERTING THE
NATION AND FORBIDDING TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO
CÆSAR, SAYING THAT HE HIMSELF IS . . . A KING.”

—LUKE 23:2.

"Rétablir le Royaume de Dieu, le dégager de ses formes transitoires et incomplètes, . . . tel est son plan."—PRESSENSÉ.

"Ce vrai Royaume de Dieu, ce Royaume de l' esprit, qui fait chacun roi et prêtre : ce Royaume qui, comme le grain de sénévé, est devenu un arbre qui ombrage le monde, . . . Jésus l'a compris, l'a voulu l'a fondé."—RENAN, "Vie de Jésus," p. 294.

"Christ was conscious of being in the strictest sense the King of humanity and of founding a kingdom, that is, a realm of God, to come hereafter into actual appearance, and completing itself in a visible community."—LANGE, "Life of Christ," II., 188.

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF DIVINE ROYALTY IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DI- LEMMA.

I. THERE are many causes that conspire to make our present inquiry a matter of supreme difficulty. Historical remoteness, Oriental coloring, too great familiarity with Christian phraseology—all these are obstacles in the way of an intelligent inquiry into the personal claims of Jesus Christ.

But, greater than all these, remains the difficulty of rightly understanding the life itself when we do stand face to face with it.*

Well may Canon Liddon say that "Christ's most startling revelation was himself."† Well may Dr. Farrar speak of the "glorious contradictions" of His life.‡ Well may German crit-

* "Never man spake like this Man; never was love like this love; never such a life was seen on earth before; never did the dream of poet, never the instinct of hero-worship, imagine such a Being, with such wisdom on his lips, such love in his heart, with a character so balanced and complete, with claims so outspoken and so lofty, joined to so profound a humility and so gentle a kindness towards the gainer."—Archbishop Thomson, "Word, Work, and Will," p. 112.

† "Bampton Lectures," p. 5

‡ "Witness of History to Christ," p. 83.

ics, baffled by the unanswerable logic of historical *fact*, speak of Him as "a mystery,"* "a unique phenomenon." Well may the author of "Ecce Homo" find himself, before attempting to write his work, "constrained to confess that, after reading a good many books on Christ, there was no historical character whose motives, objects, and feelings remained so incomprehensible to him.†

* "Witness of History to Christ," p. 80, note 1. The difficulty of understanding the character of our Lord "arises," says Young, "from its absolute perfection" (see "Christ of History," pp. 217, 318).

† "Ecce Homo," Preface, 5th edit., p. xxii. So Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe has treated the life and work of Christ as phenomena leaving Jesus himself as "*the greatest of miracles*." (Hatchards, 1876.) "Christ's discovery is *himself*," says the author of "Ecce Homo" elsewhere (p. 177). Cf. the remarkable language of Mr. Goldwin Smith [who, as Dr. Liddon observes, "certainly cannot be supposed to have approached the subject with any strong ecclesiastical bias"—"Some Elements of Religion," p. 217] in his lecture "On Some Supposed Consequences of the Doctrine of Historical Progress," pp. 15-18. "About the life . . . of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality, combined with profundity of insight . . . which . . . must place the Prophet of Nazareth . . . in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast" (J. S. Mill, "Essays on Religion," p. 254). Cf. the words of Dr. Farrar, with the authorities quoted, in his "Witness of History to Christ," pp. 80, sqq.: "The knights of old saw in him the Mirror of all chivalry; the monks, the Pattern of all asceticism; the philosophers, the Enlightener in all truth. To a Fénelon he has seemed the most wrapt of mystics; to a Vincent de Paul, the most practical of philanthropists; to an English poet, 'the first true

2. And so, in this shallow age of ours, we sometimes meet with a man who, in his desire

Gentleman that ever breathed.' A skeptical historian (Johann v. Muller), accidentally taking up the New Testament, suddenly finds in Him the explanation of all history," etc. So "to Strauss he is a wise Galilean Rabbi; to Schenkel, a sort of party Demagogue, the Representative of political and theological progress; to Renan, a moral Teacher whose dreamy mysticism ended in uncontrollable fanaticism and even deceit." Compare Mr. Lecky's remarks upon the originality of our Lord's teaching ("Rationalism in Europe," I., 338). So the Unitarian Channing ("Works," II., 57) is fully alive to the startling originality of Christ's character. Cf. Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," p. 232. So Birks ("Supernatural Religion," page 160) speaks rightly when he describes Christ as "a kind or species to Himself." Carlyle speaks of "our Divinest Symbol—Jesus of Nazareth, . . . a Symbol of quite perennial infinite character" ("Sartor Resartus," p. 155). Goethe confesses that "there is in [the four Gospels] the reflection of a greatness which emanated from the Person of Jesus, and which was as divine a kind as ever was seen upon earth. . . . I bow before him as the divine Manifestation of the highest principle of morality" ("Conversations with Eckermann, II., 423, Sunday, March 11, 1832). Mr. Greg allows the "splendid genius" of Christ and his "noble and lovely character" ("Creed of Christendom," 4th edit., II., 41). Mr. Parker says of Him, "He unites in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realizing the dream of prophets and sages. . . . He pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God" ("Discourses of Religion," p. 294). For a collection of similar opinions from Jean Paul Richter, Spinoza, Kant and Jacobi, Schelling and Hegel, Rousseau and Channing, Matthias Claudius and Herder (and the familiar words of Napoleon), see Geikie's "Life and Words of Christ," ch. I., *ad init.*, pp. 1-3, 13, and Garbett, "Boyle Lectures," pp. 69-72. The author of "Supernatural Religion"

to be thought cleverer than his forefathers, rejects the divine Christ offhand. Ignorant of evidences which no really able critic, however hostile, dares to reject, he is confronted by what he calls "impossibilities" in the Gospel history; he is bitten with that "*anti-supernatural*" mania which colors so much of the prevailing skepticism; he dares not face what he holds to be the science of the century without the shield of the positivist; he shrinks from the scornful arrogance which lays the Christian apologist beneath the imputation of an obsolete dogmatism; and in this, which he takes to be the only possible attitude for a "fashionable" thinker, he is guilty of the criminal presumption of at once prejudging Christianity to be untrue. He declares the Christ to be a mere demigod of our childhood, the product of a too credulous age, the result of mere empty fanaticism; or at best he holds His life an *olla podrida* of allegories,

"sees in Christ the rare spectacle of a life . . . uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles" (II., 487). Dr. Reynolds speaks of His "overwhelming originality" (Congregational Union Lecture, 1874, "John Baptist," p. 489). Mr. Clodd (arguing through 360 pages that the Christian creed is one portentous *falsehood*) speaks of the "loveliness and faithfulness" of a life "whose influence for good . . . cannot well be overrated" (pp. 354, 231, etc.). See also P. Schaff's "Collection of Impartial Testimonies to the Character of Christ" at pp. 183-283 of his work on "The Person of Christ" (Nisbet, 1880).

parables, and prodigies—a mere tissue of metaphor.*

Now I am not here to-day to discuss the rational possibility of this theory as a sufficient explanation of Christianity.

3. But I will so far adopt the line of argument which it suggests as to apply it to the subject of our thoughts this morning.

Nothing can be plainer, from the general tenor of the Gospel narrative, than that Jesus Christ claimed, in some way or other, to be a King. No phrase appears more frequently in his teaching than a certain “kingdom” which he, as its Sovereign, was making known to men.†

4. Well, in view of this claim, what do men reply who reject the Godhead of our Lord?

The answer is that all such language is purely metaphorical; that it was a mere figure of rhetoric, the highly ardent and enthusiastic or emblematic way of speaking that is not uncommon among Oriental teachers.

* See for instance, Clodd's “Jesus of Nazareth,” *passim*, especially pp. 57, 230, etc.

† Dr. Liddon points out that the phrase βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν occurs thirty-two times in St. Matthew's Gospel; βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ five times. The latter phrase occurs fifteen times in St. Mark, thirty-three times in St. Luke, twice in St. John. Cf. T. Colani, “Jésus Christ et les Croyances Messianiques de son Temps,” ch. 2, pp. 59, sqq.

"Such interpreters," however, it has well been said, "do not see that they attribute to [the Jews] intelligent men a mistake worthy of children or savages. We do not find in history whole nations misled, bloody catastrophes and revolutions produced, by verbal mistakes that could be explained in a moment. Again," the same writer continues, "they attribute to Christ conduct which is quite unaccountable. A wise man may at times dilate upon the authority which his wisdom gives him, and in doing so may compare himself to a king; but if he saw that his words were so grossly misapprehended that he was in danger of involving himself and others in political difficulties, he would certainly withdraw or explain the metaphor."*

5. But this, as we shall see, Christ deliberately refused to do. He "clung firmly to the

* "Ecce Homo," pp. 28. For an elaborate exposition of the Lord's meaning and attitude in respect to the "Kingdom" which he proclaimed, see Lange, "Life of Christ" (Eng. trans., Clark), Vol. II., pp. 187-267. Dr. Reynolds, in his Congregational Union Lectures for 1874 ("John the Baptist"), gives (p. 234, note 3) a catalogue of the most important works "purporting to throw light upon the Hebrew and Christian conception of the kingdom of God." Besides the literature there specified and the other works alluded to in the present Lecture, see Maurice's "Lectures on St. Luke, The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven;" Plumptre's "Christ and Christendom," Lecture III., "On the Training of the King" (pp. 85, sqq.); Reynold's, *loc. cit.*, pp. 234-243; T. Hughes, "The Manliness of Christ," Part IV., pp. 71, sqq.

title" of King; and his claim to be a King was the ground of his execution.*

Was there then nothing substantial in his royalty? Or, in the terse language of the same author I have just quoted, "*Did he die for a metaphor?*"†

Let us try to answer this question.

6. I need hardly remind you that the ministry of Christ was ushered in by the proclamation of a certain kingdom. "The kingdom of God is at hand." This was the message of the Baptist; this was the keynote to the whole ministry of Christ.‡

* M. Eugène Burnouf has some interesting remarks upon the ascription of regal honors to *Sakya Mouni* by his followers. It does not appear that the Buddha ever made any such pretension himself.—"Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien," p. 315, sqq.

† "What was it that Jesus sought? Was it his design to found a free brotherhood of elect spirits? . . . a religion of enfranchised intelligences? . . . Was his work to consist in a simple idealization of Judaism issuing in a sort of Socratic humanism?" etc. (Pressensé "*Jésus Christ*," English trans., pp. 270, sqq.). Dean Milman has well remarked that Pilate may have been highly puzzled at first by the "kingship" of our Lord, and may have attributed His assuming the title to the mysticism of a philosopher. He aptly cites Hor., "Epp.," II., 1, 106 ("*Sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives, liber, honoratus, pulcher, Rex denique regum*"), and *ibid.*, "Sat.," I., 3, 125 ("At pueri ludentes, *Rex eris*, inquit, *Si recte facies*").—"History of Christianity," I., 322.

‡ Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection," pp. 163, sqq. "The kingly glory of Christ is the truth specially revealed in the first Gospel, which begins with his line of royal descent

7. The announcement fell upon ears that were quick to catch its full significance. "The kingdom of God" was no unfamiliar conception to Jewish hearts. Their literature was saturated with it. Their deepest national instincts were bound up in the expectation of that announcement.

Through all their history this expectation had been fostered with jealous care.* Gradually, but yet with ever-increasing clearness of definition, the Messianic hope had been unfolded in the history of their patriarchs and law-givers, their judges, their prophets, and their kings. It was the expectation of One who, springing from the woman's seed, was to bless in the family of Abraham all the nations of the

and with the message to the wise men, 'Where is He that is born King of the Jews?' " etc. (Birks, "Supernatural Religion," p. 194).

* See above, Lecture III. Cf. Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 86. "The Jews never lost the sense of the blessing which was to come through them to all nations. . . . The law alone was unable to train them to their appointed work. A kingdom was established, and with it a new conception of the Messiah was added," etc. Cf. Pressensé: "Il est dans l'Ancien Testament une notion fondamentale qui le traverse tout entier. . . . Sémissible à un roi de la terre, Dieu a eu sa résidence dans le temple de Jérusalem. . . . Ainsi le royaume de Dieu s'est localisé dans les institutions Mosâiques," etc. ("Jésus Christ," pp. 332, sqq.). See Maurice's "Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven," *passim*, especially pp. 137, sqq.

world; the expectation of a Shiloh to whom belongs of right the sceptre of royalty—a sceptre out of Israel in virtue of which One should be established as a universal Lawgiver, Teacher, and Prince.*

8. And the portraiture that is thus dimly foreshadowed at this early stage of the Jewish annals becomes more vividly delineated as those annals are developed. "The patriarchal age had looked forward to a descendant of Abraham; the Mosaic to a prophet and a legislator;"† and the royalty that was prefigured in each of these periods is openly proclaimed in the records of the Jewish monarchy. In the histories of David and Solomon is found the human type of a sovereignty the true dignity of which is depicted in the Messianic Psalms.‡ "The

* Gen. 3: 15; 9: 26; 22: 18; 49: 10. See also Num. 24: 17; Deut. 18: 18, 19; and cf. Rom. 16: 20; Gal. 4: 4; Heb. 2: 14; 1 John 3: 8, etc. It is important to observe that the strictest philological criticism confirms the general Church doctrine as to the royal Messiah of Genesis. Cf. Cheyne on this subject, "Isaiah," Vol. II., essay IV.; and compare Birks, "Supernatural Religion," pp. 194, sqq.

† Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 79.

‡ "David was a Messiah," says an eminent contemporary philologist, "because he was God's vicegerent in the government of his people Israel. . . . Each of David's successors was in like manner theoretically a Messiah" ("The Prophecies of Isaiah," vol. II., p. 177). See his remarks upon the Messianic Psalms, *Ibid.*, pp. 177, sqq. For the whole subject, see Dr. Alexander's (Bishop of Derry) "Bampton Lectures," 1876, "The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity."

king who gave unity and security to the nation was but a type of the Son of David whose kingdom should extend in eternal blessings over all the world.”* He was to be a monarch of more than human beauty; full of grace were to be his lips; the sword of a world-wide justice should be girded on his thigh. His throne was to be everlasting, his dominion from sea to sea, from the flood unto the world’s end. Before him all kings were to fall down; all nations were to do homage at his feet. Peace and righteousness, judgment, salvation, deliverance, redemption, absolute victory—these were to be the “pomp and circumstance” of his empire.†

9. With equal force of vivid portraiture is depicted throughout the prophetic books the vision of a divine Messiah-King. He is one who will raise his ensign as the rallying-point of the world’s hopes and aspirations; a King whose throne is based upon moral force; a King whom the daughter of Jerusalem shall one day behold coming to her, not through blood and slaughter, but in lowly guise, sitting upon an ass—and yet a King whose dominion shall be from sea to sea and shall never pass away.‡

* Westcott, “Gospel of the Resurrection,” p. 86.

† Cf. *Psalms* 2; 21; 22: 27-29; 45-48; 68; 72; 76; 89: 19. sqq.; 93; 95-99; 110; 132: 11; 145: 11-13; 146: 10, etc.

‡ Cf. e. g., *Isa.* 11; 32: 1; 42: 1; 49: 6, etc.; *Jer.* 23: 5; 33: 15, 17; *Dan.* 9: 24; *Zech.* 9: 9, etc.

10. Nor had this expectation ceased in the years immediately preceding the birth of Christ. True, the Scriptural ideal of a great moral Deliverer and spiritual King had become debased and degraded in the popular belief. But the belief itself was there, notwithstanding; the belief in some world-wide Conqueror, some Jewish Alexander or Jewish Cæsar, who was to rescue the nation, to fulfil its most glorious political aspirations.*

11. Among the Gentiles, too, the same belief, though in another form, prevailed.† There, too, was a yearning for some philosopher who should resolve all the problems of humanity; "a princely infant before whom the rocks should flow with honey and the briars bloom with rose."‡

12. Thus it was no new conception with Jesus Christ, revived by the announcement of the *Kingdom* of God.

But consider its momentous bearing upon the *Person* of Jesus Christ. Israel had been cradled in the atmosphere of Theocracy.§ *God*

* Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 87.

† Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," II., 289. Cf. Lacordaire, "Conférences," Eng. Transl., p. 166.

‡ Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," page. 63. Cf. Virg., "Ecl." IV., 30, etc.; "Æn." VI., 793; Suet., "Vesp." IV., 5. Cf. Augustine, "De Civ. Dei," 18, 23.

§ For a full exposition of this point in its bearing upon the claim of Christ to a divine Royalty, see especially Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," Sect. III., pp. 98-118.

had chosen his fathers from among all the families of mankind. *God* had vouchsafed to feed them as his flock, to lead them, to manifest himself as their Lawgiver and their King. So that in announcing the kingdom of God, Christ was understood to mean that he was about to restore to the Jewish nation the sovereignty of Jehovah.

13. But how? In what way would he support his claims?

Already, in his temptation in the wilderness, the vision of universal sovereignty over the kingdoms of this world had been presented to him.* In the full consciousness of all these dim longings of his nation he might have looked for every success if he had employed force in the establishment of the Messianic kingdom.

14. But from the beginning Christ declined to use his opportunity in this way. He deliberately determined "to adopt another course: to found his empire upon the consent and not the fears of mankind; to trust himself with his royal claims and his terrible purity . . . defenceless among mankind."†

In this he never wavered.

Throughout his life there is always to be seen a most absolute and serene conviction of his royalty.‡ He calls himself habitually King and

* "Ecce Homo," p. 16.

† "Ecce Homo," p. 16.

‡ This does not depend upon isolated expressions respect-

Master,* and he claims expressly the character and functions of that divine Messiah-King for whom the nation had for ages been accustomed to look.†

And yet he consistently refused to allow himself to be regarded as an earthly monarch, consistently repudiated the splendors of an earthly throne.

15. And here we can already trace the secret of his ultimate rejection by the Jews. He raised their hopes to the utmost, only to dash them down before their eyes. The kingdom of God,

ing His Kingship. The whole tenor of his life distinctly implies his own inherent supremacy. This will be clear from considering the language he uses about himself. Whatever meaning we attach to his use of such phrases as "The light of the world" (John 8:12), "the way" to heaven (*ib.* 14:6), "the truth," "the life" (*ib.*), "the bread of life" (*ib.* 6:35), "the living bread which came down from heaven" (*ib.* 6:51), the "water," of which whosoever shall drink "shall never thirst" (*ib.* 4:14), the one "Good Shepherd" of the flock of humanity (*ib.* 10:11, 14), in contrast with whom all his predecessors were "thieves and robbers" (*ib.* 10:8), "the vine" (*ib.* 15:1), "the door" (*ib.* 10:9), "the resurrection and the life" (*ib.* 11:25), and other expressions at least equally ambitious in purport (cf. *ib.* 15:5, 6, 14; 8:23; 6:47; 14:6, etc.)—yet, as the author of "Ecce Homo" well remarks, "we cannot deny, without rejecting all the evidence before us, that he used words which have substantially the same meaning; . . . that he commanded men to leave everything and attach themselves to him; that he declared himself King, Master, and Judge of men" (p. 177).

* Matt. 23:8, 10, etc.

† Mark 8:29, 30; 12:6; 14:62, etc.

to which they were looking forward as an earthly kingdom, he revealed as a spiritual kingdom. As against the proud exclusiveness of their expectations, he announced a kingdom for all the world.*

And this was fatal to his worldly position. It not only angered the Jewish leaders, but it bewildered his own most attached followers. Professing to be a King, he declined to use the weapons of a king. And this, in the eyes of his accusers, was unpardonable.†

16. They had applied tests to ascertain the precise limits of his Royalty.‡ They knew, e. g., that their kings had imposed tribute on the surrounding nations; if this Jesus was indeed duly commissioned to the throne of David, he would

* "If the Messiah really came, how else should he enter on his high office than by breaking the Roman yoke asunder?" He "must restore the true kingdom, the throne of his father David, . . . and establish a new world-wide empire in which the sons of Abraham would be the dominant class. He who did not present himself as a mighty conqueror, at the head of a victorious army, could not be the true Messiah, etc. . . . Hence the Jewish logic: whoever declares himself to be the Messiah, by this declares himself to be the king of the Jews. But whoever does this puts himself in opposition to the dominion of the emperor," etc. (Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," II. 329, 330.)

† "Gospel for the Nineteenth Century," pp. 61, sqq.

‡ For the thoughts that follow, as indeed for much that has been already suggested, in this connection, the author must express his direct obligations to the author of "Ecce Homo," especially chaps. 4 and 5.

surely never sanction the payment of tribute to a foreigner. But he quietly bade them "pay back into Cæsar's treasury the coins that came from Cæsar's mint."

So, again, the ancient kings had been judges. But when Christ was invited to intervene in a civil action concerning an inheritance, and when he was asked to pronounce judgment upon a criminal case of adultery, he disavowed the office of legal judge. So, too, when arraigned before Pilate, he decidedly refrained from assuming the captaincy of any earthly host. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight."

17. No wonder his followers and the Jews were perplexed. Still continuing to speak of himself as a King, with such consistency that his apostles understood him literally, even to the extent of quarrelling for places and dignities under him, he yet declined all these the principal functions of the Jewish king he proclaimed himself to be.

They were staggered at the paradox of a ruler without a throne, a monarch without tribute money, a sovereign without armies, a king without royal robe or crown or sceptre. They could not reconcile his royal pretensions with "the homely tenor of his life."*

* "Ecce Homo," p. 30. Cf. Maurice, "The message [of the Kingdom of God] came to the Jews as a message which

18. We can now see their mistake.

Let us realize the tremendous magnitude, and the awful *reality*, of this great claim of Christ to be the Messiah-King.

All historical students, of whatever school, admit that the grand intention of Christ was to found a world-wide and imperishable society. And that society is spoken of by him, directly or by implication, all through his ministry, as the *Kingdom of God*.

19. That conception, as we have already seen, was no new one. The *Royalty of God* had been the root idea of the Jewish polity for ages. And it was over this *Kingdom of God* that Christ actually claimed to preside. Just as the invisible Jehovah had *called* the nation over which he presided, so did he.

As in the early time the voice had come to Abraham bidding him leave his kindred and his country and get him into a land of which God would tell him, so now, through Palestine, and soon throughout the world, a voice was heard bidding men give up "father or mother or house or children or lands for Christ's sake and the gospel's."*

they expected. It came as a perplexing overthrow of their expectations" ("Lectures on the Gospel of the Kingdom," p. 138).

* "Ecce Homo," p. 36.

20. Thus does Christ claim to represent the divine Founder of the Jewish nation ; thus does he claim to be the Father of an everlasting state—King of a world-wide empire.

Is this claim anything less than blasphemous—utterly unpardonable—if it be not indeed the natural attribute of his true divinity?

21. And his royal pretensions are not limited by even this magnificent claim. He not only arrogates the functions of the divine Author of the Jewish theocracy, but, secondly, he claims, as a divine King, to make laws for his kingdom.* He is not only the Father, but the *Legislator*, of the human family. On this point we have already dwelt in a former lecture,† and we need only remember here that those who aspire to be loyal subjects in the Kingdom of Christ are bound by an obedience of infinite obligation to a code of spiritual principles which Christ, as Supreme Legislator, promulgates upon his sole authority. And thirdly, he claimed, as a King, to be *Judge* in the new society.‡ The vastness of this claim cannot be overrated. “I believe,” says a writer who will at least not be suspected

* See Sermon on the Mount.

† Lecture III.

‡ Matt. 25:31-46; 26:63, 64. On this passage a German critic remarks: “Jesus not only professes before his judges to be the Christ and Son of God in a general sense, but in such a sense as could be true of no man or angel,” etc. (J. T.

of partiality—Mr. F. W. Newman—"that Jesus habitually spoke of himself by the title Son of Man, and that in assuming that title he tacitly alluded to the seventh chapter of Daniel, and claimed for himself the *throne of judgment* over all mankind."* That our Lord really advanced this tremendous claim to be the Judge of all mankind is admitted by the most hostile critics.† Consider what this means. Christ says he will return to earth as Judge of all mankind; that before him will be gathered all the nations of the earth, and he will judge them. He literally and deliberately claims this unspeakably tremendous dignity—a supremacy so awful that, as has well been said, "the imagination recoils in sheer agony from the task of seriously contemplating it."‡

22. This, then, in faintest outline, is the meaning of the Christ when he claims to be a King. He means that his royalty will appear in a universal monarchy—a kingdom of all the world—a kingdom in which he is supreme Monarch in Beck, "Christliche Reden," Pt. IV., p. 868, quoted by Auberlen).

* "Phases of Faith," p. 149.

† Baur, quoted by Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 173.

‡ Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 174. The testimony of the Emperor Napoleon to the actual fulfilment of Christ's superhuman claim to adoration will occur to many readers. See, for a full report of the authority for it, Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 148.

virtue of his own inherent authority. The monarchy is founded by himself; its laws are centred in his person; its rewards or punishments will be administered to all mankind by himself, and himself alone.*

23. It is also necessary, before drawing our conclusion, to recollect that on both sides of his earthly parentage he claimed to be of the Jewish royal house—the lineage of David. This claim, at any rate, has never been seriously disputed.†

* “He declared that the world should bow down to Him, the nations worship him, that he would judge the quick and dead. Are they pretensions of a straw-crowned Bedlam monarch? . . . No; beautiful in humility, a little child is symbol of those who enter His kingdom” (Reynolds, “The Supernatural in Nature,” p. 500). “When they saw Him in every little child they would begin to have some apprehension of his royalty” (Maurice, “Lectures on St. Luke: The Gospel of the Kingdom,” p. 159).

† It would be unnecessary, except for the writer's experience to the contrary, to point out that the mystery of the incarnation is of a kind which, on the very face of it, must involve “genealogical difficulties.” It surely needs no extraordinary acumen to discover that, if Christ be virgin-born, the pedigree of his “father” Joseph can have but a technical and transitory relationship to Christ's real and spiritual claim to the (theocratic) throne which David held as God's vicerent. Yet the writer has met with those who are staggered at this very obvious and self-evident fact, as if it had been a new discovery. But when we recollect the real magnitude of that historical crisis which culminated at Christ's birth; when we recall the whole bearings of the Jewish theocracy; when we recollect that, for all earthly and legal

24. Thus did he present himself to the affrighted Jews—as a King, “a King who neither had, nor cared to have, a court or army; a King who could not enforce a command; a King who preached and lectured like a scribe, yet in his weakness and insignificance could not forget his dignity, had his royal title often in his mouth, and lectured with an authority that no scribe assumed. These violent contrasts, this disappointment of their theories, this homely parody of their hopes,”* could have but one end-

requirements, Joseph was the *bona fide husband* of the virgin he had espoused (cf. Deut. 22 : 23, 24); and lastly, when we add that no evidence whatever has been adduced to refute the belief that the virgin was a *kinswoman* of her husband (so that her own ancestry and his would practically be identical), and that the Messiah is invariably promised in the line of *a woman*, surely the genealogical difficulties of Christ’s claim, whether “legal” or “spiritual,” to the throne of David, are reduced to a minimum, except of course to those who really believe that the virgin birth itself, as a physical phenomenon, is *impossible* with the God who is the Author of life itself. For the specific difficulties connected with the omission, etc., of names in the Gospel genealogies, see Olshausen on “The Gospels,” Vol. I., p. 35, sqq.; Article, “Genealogy of Jesus Christ,” in Smith’s “Dictionary of the Bible,” I., 662, sqq. (see authorities quoted, p. 668); Farrar, “Life of Christ,” I., 9, note; Mill, “Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels,” pp. 147–217, etc. Cf. Reynolds, “The Supernatural in Nature,” pp. 153, 154 (C. Kegan Paul, 1880, 2d edit.). See also Encyclopædia Britannica, 9th edit., Vol. X., p. 143, Art., “Genealogies.”

* “Ecce Homo,” p. 29. Cf. the words of Mrs. Magnus (“About the Jews,” pp. 73, sqq.): “When Jesus came among

ing. His self-assertion they could have excused had it been backed by the outward semblances of royalty. But self-assertion so tremendous, with self-abasement so humble, this was a paradox they could not contemplate without intense dismay.

25. The result could not long be doubtful.*

It was indeed impossible to shirk the grave issues of such astounding pretensions. Other masters, other teachers, other kings, might claim much from their followers and subjects; but here was One who claimed *all*—the life, the soul itself. Here was One who calmly sets aside in his own favor all the most sacred ties of family and kindred.

Who and what is he who dares thus to advance this most imperious claim?

Follow me—Come unto me—Forsake all—Be my disciple—He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

them announcing that 'the kingdom of heaven was at hand,' many took the words to have a literal meaning. . . . But when no change came; when 'the kingdom' he spoke of remained a half-visionary, half-incomprehensible, and wholly unattainable dream; then his hold on the hearts and imaginations of the people was gone. . . . What the people wanted was a leader, 'strong and powerful, who would invoke miracles on their behalf; . . . one who would throw off the Roman yoke, refuse to pay the hated tribute, and reëstablish the ancient kingdom in all its ancient glory.'

* See Mr. T. Hughes on "The Manliness of Christ," pp. 120, sqq.

Who, those Jews might well ask, is he? Is the claim tolerable if he be only man? His audacity was in truth intolerable. For they dared not face the portentous alternative that perhaps after all his claims were justified in fact.

26. And so, hoping to escape from the momentous dilemma, they executed him, on grounds, moreover, that were entirely self-contradictory.

They accused him to Pilate as a political conspirator;* in their hearts they were angry because he was *not* politically ambitious. They informed against him as dangerous; their real complaint was that he was not dangerous enough, so far as earthly power was concerned, to warrant his vast pretensions.

Pilate puts him to death as a political offender—a traitor against Cæsar; the Jews denounce him precisely because he will *not* claim rivalry with Cæsar. Pilate wrote over his cross, “The King of the Jews;” the Jews themselves wanted

* Mr. Clodd, in his otherwise imperfect account of the phenomenon of the life of Christ, truly says of the trial of our Lord that “the Sanhedrin artfully and unjustly decided to insure his conviction by charging him with sedition, on the ground that his claim to the Messiahship involved a claim to kingship over the Jews, therefore casting off the rule of Rome” (“Jesus of Nazareth,” p. 347). Cf. Milman’s “History of Christianity,” I., 320, sqq.

him to alter the inscription by adding that *He said* he was the King of the Jews; he said it, but he could not support his claims with earthly weapons.* Pilate feared that His kingdom *was* of this world; the Jews were angry precisely because it was *not*.†

27. So in their bewilderment they crowned him King.‡

They knew not what they did the while.

They put on him a purple robe—in mockery; they put the reed sceptre in his hand; they bowed the knee in scornful homage; they gave him his crown—but it was of thorns; and they placed him on his throne—it was the shameful cross,§ the instrument of a slave's agony, the symbol of an utter detestation.

Little thought they of the issue of their deed. Little did they realize that Christ upon his cross would be the rallying-point of millions of human hearts in ages yet unborn!

* Auberlen well points out in this connection that, by requesting to have the inscription altered, the Jews expressly demonstrate that Jesus declared himself to be the Messiah ("Die Göttliche Offenbarung," p. 72, trans.). See Luke 23 : 38 ; John 19 : 19.

† "Ecce Homo," p. 29.

‡ See F. D. Maurice's "Lectures on St. Luke, The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven," especially Lecture XXVII., "The King on His Cross," p. 352, etc.

§ "Upon what throne do men adore Him? Upon a cross." Lacordaire, "Conférences," Eng. trans., p. 87.

28. "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

The cry of the apostate emperor is the verdict of Christendom to-day, for the King of the Jews upon his cross is, even by the admission of M. Renan, a King upon an everlasting throne.*

* "Il a trône dans la conscience. Il est Roi pour longtemps encore. . . . Sa beauté est éternelle, son règne n'aura pas de fin" (Renan, "Etudes d'Hist. Rel.," p. 214). "Repose maintenant dans ta gloire, noble initiateur. Ton œuvre est achevée: ta divinité est fondée. . . . Entre toi et Dieu on ne distinguera plus. Pleinement vainqueur de la mort, prends possession du Royaume où te suivront . . . des siècles d'adorateurs" ("Vie de Jésus," 14th edit., p. 440).

V.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO WORK MIRACLES
AND TO FORGIVE SINS, AND IS CON-
DEMNED AS A SORCERER AND AN
IMPIOUS IMPOSTOR.

“WHO IS THIS WHICH SPEAKETH BLASPHE-
MIES? WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS BUT GOD
ALONE?”

“... BUT JESUS SAID, WHETHER IS EASIER TO
SAY, THY SINS BE FORGIVEN THEE, OR TO SAY,
RISE UP AND WALK?”—LUKE 5 : 21, 22, 23.

“HE CASTETH OUT DEVILS BY THE PRINCE OF
THE DEVILS.”—MATT. 9 : 34.

"Can there be anything more miraculous than the existence of man and the world? anything more literally supernatural than the origin of things?"—LOTHAIR.

"It is incredible that there should be two orders of truth in absolute and everlasting opposition."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"The New Testament plainly asserts that what Christ accomplished was not in defiance of law, but in fulfilment of it."—STEWART and TAIT.

"It is a matter of no little wonder that, in this nineteenth century, men should be so sagacious as to discover that Christ and his apostles did not attest their claims and doctrines with miraculous powers, when learned, sagacious, and sufficiently hostile unbelievers of the earliest centuries, having opportunities for discovering the state of the case such as they cannot pretend to, were constrained to acknowledge precisely the contrary. I marvel that Celsus and Porphyry and Hierocles and Julian and the scribes and Pharisees can rest in their graves when such reflections are cast upon the zeal and talents with which they searched for imposture in the works of Christ."—MCILVAINE.

"We find ourselves before a very simple dilemma : either Jesus Christ and his apostles were sincere or they were impostors."—LACORDAIRE, "Conférences" (Eng. trans.), p. 215.

✓

CHRIST'S CLAIM TO SUPERNATURAL POWER IN WITNESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA.

1. THE great arraignment gathers grandeur as it proceeds. The historical Christ is at the bar of our judgment.

His indictment is before us. We have heard his accusers. We have given full weight to their testimony. We have thankfully availed ourselves of their critical sagacity in regard to the credibility of the Gospel records. We have assumed *nothing* but what the humanitarian allows to be fairly deducible from the documents before us.

2. We have seen that, in the words of Prof. Tulloch, "the Christ of the gospel stands *alone*. . . . In all the gallery of history there is no likeness to him. There are noble and magnanimous countenances, but none such as his. There are splendid characters, but they are pale beside the lustre of his purity and beneficence."*

Other great teachers—Zartusht (Zoroaster), Kong-fu-tse (Confucius), the Pharaohs, Sakya Mouni (the Buddha), Socrates, Mohammed—these have great and admirable qualities; but

* Tulloch, "Beginning Life," p. 62.

even in the case of those whose claims at first appear to be parallel to those of Christ, their lives can always be explained on a perfectly natural basis.*

* The very name and date of the "heaven-sent founder" of the Persian creed have been the subject of doubt. See Hardwick, "Christ and other Masters," p. 521, sqq., note⁴. Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," I., 381, sq. Milman, "History of Christianity," I., 63; II., 51, 250, sqq.

Confucius was a sort of political sacerdotalist, who, far from deifying himself, was very near deifying the Emperor of China. "I cite the patterns left us by the ancients." "The sage and the man of perfect virtue, how dare I rank myself with them?" Such were his tenets. For details see Dr. Legge's work on "The Life and Teaching of Confucius," especially p. 115, where he says, "I am unable [after long study] to regard him as a great man." So cf. Hardwick, "Christ and other Masters," pp. 282, etc., and the authorities there cited. Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," I., p. 59.

As to Buddha, see Lecture VI. for M. St. Hilaire's opinion. M. Eugène Burnouf thus summarizes his claims: "C'est le fils d'un roi qui se fait Religieux, et qui n'a, pour se recommander auprès du peuple, que la supériorité de sa vertu et de sa science." He was "un homme qui parvint à un degré d'intelligence et de vertu que chacun doit se proposer comme l'exemple de sa vie."—"Introd. à l'Hist. du Bouddhisme Indien" (2d edit.), pp. 119, 300, etc.

His *subsequent* deification by his followers only serves to make more striking the personal claims of Christ. Properly speaking, Buddhism "has no God" whatever. (Cf. Barry's "Boyle Lectures," pp. 21-24, and note, *ibid.*, pp. 38-40. So Hardwick, "Christ and other Masters," p. 155, etc.).

Of Socrates it has well been said that "he is altogether and throughout a Greek. . . . His code of morals tolerates . . . habits and feelings quite at variance with . . . Christian notions," (Rev. C. F. Cook in "Christian Evidence Society Lectures on Modern Skepticism," p. 485). So Zeller, "Soc-

But the Christ, while his life and character have been the subject of far more minute historical delineation, is seen, as the result of close investigation, to be at the same time enveloped in an atmosphere of supernaturalism such as is altogether without parallel in any person to whose life the touchstone of historical criticism has been applied with anything like the same candor.

3. After submitting the personal claims of this unique Personage to the test of common

rates and the Socratic Schools," especially ch. 3-10. So too Döllinger, "Gentile and Jew," I., 273-280, etc.

Of Buddha and Confucius it has been said that, "though, as might be expected, in some points of their moral teaching and in their spiritual aspirations they bear a true resemblance to Him in whom human nature was perfectly represented, yet each of them differed from Him . . . in one especial characteristic; each of them is the creature of his race and of his age; the influence of each is felt in the full development of the peculiar tendencies of his own section of the human family; in the one case of physical languor and mental dreaminess; in the other, of a formal and conventional morality and of political unity secured by the sacrifice of all independent action and thought" (Cook in "Christian Evidence Society Lectures on Modern Skepticism," p. 484). As to Mohammed, Paley's well-known remarks are still unanswerable ("Evidences of Christianity," Part II., ch. 9). Cf. McIlvaine's "New York Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity," Lecture IX., pp. 280, sqq. "Many an orthodox Mohammedan," writes Max Müller, "will relate miracles wrought by Mohammed, but in the Koran Mohammed says distinctly that he is a man like other men. He disdains to work miracles" ("Lectures on Science of Religion," p. 27).

sense and history, we find that at every stage of the inquiry his pretensions are found to be more exorbitant, and yet never inconsistent with themselves.

His claims were not confined to the mere witness of his life itself, as that life was led beneath the eyes of his contemporaries. He not only challenged the imputation of the slightest moral obliquity, but in the very circumstances under which he came into the world he appears plainly to have claimed a witness to his entirely exceptional personality.

4. He claimed, for instance, to be the Jewish Messiah; to have been predicted, that is, in the literature and the history of the only "theocratic" nation in the world, for at least two thousand years before his birth; predicted not only by definite prophecy, but by the whole history of the people themselves. Although the Jews had always regarded themselves as under the immediate personal government of Almighty God, as their King, their Lawgiver, and especial Patron, yet notwithstanding the enormous blasphemy of any unwarranted pretension of the kind, he the ever humble One, the ever True, not only actually claimed to be himself the righteous Ideal of their divine legislation, but even asserted his inherent authority in a new legislation which was to supersede the

Mosaic ordinances, while spiritualizing and fulfilling them.

5. Wholly consistent with this startling "audacity" was the conduct of the new Teacher in definitely avowing himself to be verily and indeed none other but the King himself of the Jewish nation, and, as an inseparable result of this avowal, to be actually the universal Sovereign and Judge of the human race at large.

6. If the sublime attitude all this implies has been presented here in anything short of actual irreverence, if the true proportions of Christ's human meekness and divine condescension have not been distorted by the ill-judged imputation of flagrant blasphemy, we shall already have suspected that his life is larger than can be measured by the ordinary instruments of human experience. Such a one as the sinless, truthful Messiah-King could not, conceivably, have moved among the sons of men without the accompaniment of what must be to us marvels of inherent power. His presence must surely be irradiated by the awful light of his superhuman pretensions. It must surely betray itself by a superhuman energy of action.*

* For further illustration of this line of argument, see Westcott, "Gospel of the Resurrection," *passim*; especially Introduction and p. 68. So Birks, "Supernatural Religion,"

7. Before considering whether these *a priori* anticipations are capable of being realized in the further claims of Jesus Christ, let us for a moment omit the life itself and recall some phenomena of its subsequent results.*

History, then, is witness to an astonishing revolution which was effected in the sphere of human society by the life and work of Christ. By the actions of those who had been intimate friends of Christ, and who cheerfully laid down life itself in corroboration of their veracity, it is clear that a certain new phenomenon must have transpired after the death of Christ. A society of which Christ has been the Founder had appeared of course in absolute extinction at his

p. 44, sq. Wilberforce on "The Incarnation," p. 91, note 11. "Christ's miracles," says Dr. Liddon ("Bampton Lectures," p. 156), "manifestly flow forth from the majestic life resident in the worker;" they were "just such acts as might be expected from him, being such as he was. . . . They are like the kind deeds of the wealthy or the good advice of the wise." Cf. Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," pp. 18, 19. Bushnell, "Nature and the Supernatural," has some valuable remarks (chapter 11) upon the subject of the Christian miracles, traversing the objections and reviewing the admissions of skeptical writers—Spinoza, Hume, Strauss, Parker, Hennel.

* For fuller treatment of the *a posteriori* argument, which is only barely alluded to in the following sections, see, among a number of works, a sermon on "The Rise of the Church of Christ an Evidence of His Resurrection," by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, in "Some Witnesses for the Faith" (S. P. C. K.), pp. 51-74.

death. Its members had deserted him. Their cause appeared to be hopelessly futile. Some few peasants of a remote Jewish province, numbering something less than a score or so of persons, alone represented a "church" which the whole powers of the Jewish and Roman authority had combined to annihilate and crush in the bud.

Nevertheless, after the lapse of less than two months, the new faith arose phoenix-like from its ashes, and from that day to this its progress has been, if not absolutely uninterrupted, yet certainly continuous, aggressive, and victorious.*

8. Honesty and common sense oblige us to admit that some wholly novel experience must have been at the root of the sudden transformation.† The simple and straightforward testimony of twelve men amply confirms the probability of this explanation. They gladly threw aside all temporal enjoyments in order to announce, at the peril of life, the facts which they

* See, for a concise summary of the victories of Christianity, Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ," pp. 89-105. ✓ Compare Dr. Eaton's Bampton Lectures on "The Permanence of Christianity."

† "The only possible explanation of the phenomena of the rise and spread of Christianity is that Christ rose from the dead."—"Some Witnesses for the Faith" (S. P. C. K.), pp. 63, sqq. Cf. Dr. Westcott's essay "The Resurrection of Christ: a New Revelation," "Contemporary Review," November, 1877.

had seen and heard with their own eyes and ears. And with what result? That their announcement (whatever it was) availed, without the sword of coercion, to dethrone paganism from the Roman Empire; that though every conceivable opposition was raised to them, yet, despite persecution of every kind,* their cause became gradually more influentially supported; that it succeeded, ultimately, in changing the whole aspect of the modern world; that the facts they proclaimed are found, when honestly acted upon, to produce results which commend themselves alike to philosophers and to statesmen as the surest guarantee of civil prosperity.

9. It is obviously impossible to pursue this thought at any greater length. But from what

* Tac., "Annals," XV. 44. Cf. Acts 7:59; 12:2-4; 22:4, 5, etc. Euseb., "Ecclesiastical History," III., 36; IV., 15. Pliny's "Letters," X., 97, 98. Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," etc., chapter 16. The familiar words of Paley contain after all an unanswerable argument: "These men could not be deceivers. By only *not bearing testimony* they might have avoided all these sufferings and have lived quietly. Would men in such circumstances pretend to have seen what they never saw, assert facts which they had no knowledge of, go about lying to teach virtue, and, though not only convinced of Christ's being an impostor, but having seen the success of his imposture in his crucifixion, yet persist in carrying it on, and so persist as to bring upon themselves for nothing, and with a full knowledge of the consequence, enmity and hatred, danger and death?" ("Evidences," chapter 10, *ad fin.*) The same argument is most forcibly put by McIlvaine, "New York Lectures on Christian Evidences," Lec. VI., p. 174, sqq.

has been now said we may be prepared to approach the next stage of the great dilemma with some adequate conception of the real questions which it involves. We have, then, to consider the fact that this wondrous Personage claimed, in support of his mission, whatever that mission was, the evidence of "an astonishing instrumentality—that of miracles."*

10. As to this, let us clearly understand, there can be no room for misconception. The fact "that Christ professed to work miracles" is one which—in the words of a writer whose candor at any rate is beyond all question, the author of "Ecce Homo"—"is fully capable of being established by ordinary evidence, and is actually established by evidence as ample as any historical fact whatever."† "It is, in short," he concludes,

"Ecce Homo," p. 42.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 43. "It is impossible," says Dr. Tulloch, "with any regard to the statements of the Gospels (allowing ever so much for their alleged legendary intermixtures), to deny that Jesus did profess to work miracles. M. Renan would fain evade the conclusion, but he cannot. It is forced upon him," etc. (Lectures on M. Renan's "Vie de Jésus," p. 153). Mr. Haweis' words are notable, "What are we to think of Christ's miracles? You know a great many educated men think that they never took place at all, or that they did not take place as they are reported to have taken place. . . . I confess, my brethren, I once thought that there was a great deal to be said for this view of the question, but as I have grown more mature and weighed a greater number of facts, I am far from being of opinion that this is the correct view" ("Thoughts for the Times," p. 83).

"the best attested fact in his whole biography."*

"We may go further," he truly says, "and assert with confidence that Christ was believed by his followers really to work miracles, and that it was mainly on this account that they conceded to him the preëminent dignity and authority which he claimed. . . . Miracles," he continues (and I make no apology for quoting words which so exactly express the argument I am trying to place before you) "miracles play so important a part in Christ's scheme, that any theory which would represent them as due entirely to the imagination of his followers, or of a later age, destroys the credibility of the documents not partially but wholly, and leaves Christ a personage as mythical as Hercules." This alternative the author rejects as quite irreconcilable with the facts of criticism and with the consistency of the character of Christ in each of his four biographies—a character "so peculiar as to be altogether beyond the reach of invention, both by individual genius and still more by what is called 'the consciousness of an age.' Now if the character depicted in the Gospels," he adds, "is in the main real and historical, they (the Gospels) must be generally trustworthy, and if so, the responsibility of miracles is fixed on Christ. In this case the reality of the miracles

* "Ecce Homo," Preface, p. 10.

themselves depends in a great degree on the opinion we form of Christ's veracity, and this opinion must arise gradually from the careful examination of his whole life."*

11. Now, in the survey we have already made of other personal claims of Christ, we have gained enough knowledge of his life to be satisfied with his moral integrity. So far from any *a priori* likelihood of his deliberately deluding his followers with cleverly managed conjuring tricks, there is plainly every reason to expect that any such dishonesty would have met with his sternest condemnation.

So now let us glance briefly at the nature of the claim itself.

12. There can be no doubt of the crucial importance of this matter in days like these.

Men who reject Christianity do so, in nine cases out of ten, because of its miracles.

They argue from the continuity of natural law that miracles are in themselves impossible, and under no conceivable circumstances credible.†

* "Ecce Homo," p. 42.

† "Both the supernatural religion and its supernatural evidence labor in common under the fatal disability of being antecedently incredible."—"Supernatural Religion."

"That the Gospels are in part legendary is quite evident, because they are full of miracles and of the supernatural."—Renan, "Vie de Jésus," Introd., p. 15.

For a simple exposition of the "naturalistic" theory of

13. Now it is obviously impossible for me to enter exhaustively upon even a summary of the evidence bearing on this question.*

So that I must have recourse, as before, to the evidence of the critics and the scientists themselves.

Let us pit the skeptics themselves against each other on the question as to whether miracles themselves are possible. It is well known that Hume† pronounced that nothing is credible which is contrary to experience; that it is more probable, indeed, that testimony should be mistaken than that miracles should be true. Now on this familiar dictum the greatest of modern logicians, Mr. Mill, has clearly shown that "all that Hume has made out is that no evidence can prove a miracle to any one who

the Christian miracles, see Edward Clodd's "Jesus of Nazareth," p. 286, sqq. In view of the hopeless inadequacy of such a theory to account for the *consistent* supernaturalism of Christ's life, Mr. Clodd may very well defend himself behind the very easy assertion that "we are not called upon to account for the source of each and all the miracles related . . . as worked not only by Jesus, but by prophets before him and apostles after him." (p. 292).

* For a really exhaustive treatise on the Christian position in view of the difficulties of miracles, see Prof. Mozley's "Bampton Lectures" (1865) "On Miracles," and Trench on "The Miracles," Preliminary Essay, pp. 1-98.

† "Essays : Of Miracles."

did not previously believe the existence of a being or beings with supernatural power.”*

14. In this connection Canon Liddon† has aptly cited the evidence of the philosopher Rousseau,‡ who reminds us that objections to miracles from their *a priori* improbability cannot

* “Logic,” II., 165 (7th edit.). Of Hume’s dictum, Prof. Birks says, “It has been answered and refuted a dozen times by as many authors—Campbell, Somerville, Penrose, Chalmers, McIlvaine, Mozley, Trench, Paley” (“Supernatural Religion,” p. 153). “Its logical consistency has been shattered to pieces,” says Dr. Farrar, “by a host of writers as well skeptical as Christian. . . . It reduces itself to the very harmless proposition that anything is incredible which is contrary to a complete induction. It is in fact a flagrant *petitio principii*, used to support a wholly unphilosophical assertion” (“Witness of History to Christ,” p. 26, sq.). Of the same dictum of Hume it has been said, with perhaps pardonable levity, that it is “puppyism grown into dogmatism” (Reynolds, “The Supernatural in Nature,” p. 376.) Cf. Dr. Stoughton, Lecture, “On the Nature and Value of the Miraculous Testimony to Christianity”) “Modern Skepticism,” p. 194, sqq.). Sir Edmund Beckett speaks of Hume’s dictum as “a mere paradox, or a verbal trick, which either begs the question or is absurd.” For ‘if by “all experience” he meant “literally all experience, that simply begs the question; and if he meant only general experience, it sinks into the platitude that miracles are uncommon” (“The Origin of the Laws of Nature,” p. 17). Cf. Prof. Perowne’s “Structure of St. John’s Gospel in its Bearings on Miracles,” p. 15.

† “Bampton Lectures,” p. 135, note K.

‡ “Dieu peut-il faire des miracles? c’est à dire, peut-il déroger aux lois qu’il a établies? Cette question sérieusement traitée serait impie si elle n’ était absurde,” etc. (“Lettres écrites de la Montagne,” Lettre III.).

reasonably be urged by any man who seriously believes in a living God. "The scientific difficulty with regard to miracles will entirely disappear," say two eminent scientists, "if any view of the universe be accepted which implies the presence in it of living beings much more powerful than ourselves."*

15. Now it is impossible within our present limits to discuss the grounds upon which the assumption of a living and personal God is here taken as an axiom of the question before

* Balfour Stewart and P. Tait, in "Unseen Universe," p. 248. "A miracle cannot be declared impossible by any one who believes in a Personal God. . . . On the contrary, under particular circumstances which may happen if God reveals himself to men, miracles are as probable as ordinary phenomena under common circumstances" (Westcott, "Gospel of Resurrection," p. 36). "When Jesus was born . . . things were not in their ordinary course. A wonderful life, and the promise of a wonderful work for man, were accompanied by wonders wrought for man. . . . The whole of revelation should be studied together. Modern science has not made the belief in miracles one whit more difficult. . . . Now, as always, the believer in God can believe in miracles; for this last belief is only the tenet that God is free to work in his own world" (Archbishop Thomson, "Word, Work, and Will," p. 119). For a lucid exposition of the Christian answer to modern difficulties connected with the miracles, see "Church Quarterly Review," April, 1876, Art. I., "Supernatural Religion—The Rationale of Miracles" (pp. 1-42). The ordinary *a priori* objections to the possibility of miracles . . . are philosophically untenable wherever there is any belief in a Personal Creator and Ruler of the universe" (Barry, "Boyle Lectures," 1877-78, "The Manifold Witness for Christ," p. 288).

us.* So that without more than this bare allusion to abstract and metaphysical problems, such as altogether preclude any but the most profound and exhaustive treatment, I must simply remind you that the most recent as well as the most profound science of modern Europe entirely supports the *possibility* of what we regard as

* Cf. Westcott, "Gospel of Resurrection," p. 20, etc. For a popular survey of the cumulative evidence on which this grand assumption is founded, see Canon Barry's "Boyle Lectures" for 1876 (S. P. C. K.). The majority of men are still content with Butler's dictum, that "were they as much in earnest about religion as about their temporal affairs, they are capable of being convinced upon real evidence that there is a God who governs the world" ("Analogy of Religion" Pt. II., ch. 6, p. 232). Compare Birks, "Supernatural Religion," ch. 13 and *passim*; Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," pp. 22, sqq., who quotes πάντες δὲ Θεῶν χατέουσ' ἄνθρωποι (Hom. "Od.," III. 48). See Canon Liddon's sermon on "God, the Object of Religion" ("Some Elements of Religion," pp. 39, sqq.). "How do you know," a Bedouin was asked, "that there is a God?" "In the same way," he replied, "that I know, on looking at the sand when a man or a beast has crossed the desert—by his footsteps in the world around me" (*Ibid.*, p. 56). Even Aristotle could see that this is, after all, the grand hypothesis of all science, as well as of all theology ("de Cœl., I. 3. πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι περὶ Θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν κ.τ.λ.) Plato, "de Leg.," IX., X., 869, etc. : Cicero, "de Nat. De.," I 16; Tusc. "Disp.," I. 13, etc. "We assume," write two scientific authors, "as absolutely self-evident, the existence of a Deity who is the Creator and Upholder of all things" ("Unseen Universe," Stewart and Tait, p. 72). "From the consideration of ourselves, and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an Eternal, Most Pow-

miracles. Its contention is *not* that of many a shallow unbeliever among us—namely, that miracles are in *themselves* incredible*—but that the evidences are incomplete which commend the miracles of Christianity to us.

16. Now as regards the cogency of the evidences,† we may well be permitted, in view of much that the assailants of Christianity write and say, to doubt whether they have, for the most part, honestly taken the trouble to find out what, and of what kind, those evidences are.‡ Starting, as they avowedly do, with an uncompromising *denial* of any amount of evidence being sufficient to convince them, it may reasonably be doubted whether this inveterate determination may not necessarily prevent their

erful, and Most Knowing Being" (Locke, "Human Understanding," IV., 10). "God is the First and Eternal of all truths which can possibly exist, and the One whence all others proceed" (Descartes, "Letters," I., 112).

* "Skepticism and Faith," Brownlow Maitland (S. P. C. K.), p. 3. So M. Renan writes, "We do not say that miracles are impossible; we say there has not hitherto been a miracle that is proved" ("Vie de Jésus," *Intro.* p. 11).

† Besides such well-known works as Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospel History," and Paley's "Evidences," Luthardt ("Apologetische Vorträge"), Steinmayer (*Ibid.*), and Delitzsch ("System der Christlichen Apologetik"), are spoken of as some of the best of the more recent evidential works (Rev. F. Cook, "Modern Skepticism," p. 462, note).

‡ It has been well observed that no ordinary *industry* is required in order to acquire a really true conception of Christian evidences. And this accounts, in part, for the inadequate

really weighing the whole enormous mass of evidence which the history of the world affords them.

17. But, waiving this, let me point out, as a writer in a recent number of the "Contemporary Review"* has done with remarkable force, the extreme *arrogance* of the mere denial itself.

The man who affects to be unable to receive Christianity because of its miracles must be prepared to take upon himself a very grave responsibility, the responsibility, namely, of implying the intellectual or even the moral defect not merely of a vast aggregate number of intelligent and virtuous men and women, but of a very large percentage of that aggregate who are, presumably, his equals intellectually or otherwise; and, further, of a considerable minority of that percentage who are universally acknowledged to have been preëminent for their mental or moral gifts.

opinions of many scientists as to the claims of Christianity. They literally have had no time to give to the whole study of theological problems. Moreover, it is sadly true "that the constant opposition to science manifested by a few narrow theologians has reacted in" producing scientific unbelief. "Voltaire," says the same writer, "had little or no scholarship as to Christianity. He made disgraceful blunders as to Biblical incidents. Gibbon was about twenty-two years old when he said, 'Here I suspended my religious inquiries!' " (Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 447).

* "Contemporary Review," April, 1881: "The Arrogance of Modern Skepticism."

Let this caution, at any rate, be duly weighed.

✓ 18. If it be argued that the credulity of the masses will easily account for the unquestioning acceptance of Christianity by some two hundred millions of men at the present day, including the most civilized nations of the world; if it can be seriously maintained that these have for the most part accepted a supernatural creed without any evidence worthy of the name; yet, granting even this unlikely presumption, permit me to remind you that to reject the miracles of Christ as honestly unbelievable is to assume a position which common modesty cautions you in approaching.* For to assume it is to do one of two things, from either of which most modest men would shrink. It is to impute either the grossest intellectual *deficiency* to men like Bacon and Newton, Pascal and Bossuet, Whewell and Faraday, Thirlwall and Lightfoot, Westcott and Gladstone;† or it is to saddle such men as St. John or St. Paul—to say nothing of the long roll

* For some thoughts here suggested I am indebted to Prof. Birks ("Supernatural Religion," pp. 27-33).

† "The preaching of Christ our Lord . . . is the secret and substance and centre and heart of all preaching: not merely of facts about him and of notions about him, but of his person, his work, his character, his simple yet unfathomable sayings: here lies the secret."—Speech of Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, reported in the "Times," March 23, 1877. See, also, his review of "Ecce Homo" (Strahan, 1868), *passim*, especially pp. 198-200.

of saintly names, whether in the past or present, which this alternative suggests—with the far graver charge of conscious and deliberate dishonesty. In plain English, the man who rejects Christianity on the ground of its supernatural environment must be prepared to assert that every Christian divine, statesman, philosopher, or ordinary citizen must needs be convicted of delusion or hypocrisy; in other and still stronger terms, such as the urgency of the case may, I hope, condone, such persons must in every instance be written down fool or knave.* And in this accusation, of course, are involved not only our own contemporaries, but also those great and heroic souls of bygone ages who have, on this

* "Men of honorable name, world-heroes, historians, poets, the ablest students of nature, are not atheists, nor are they secularists. The Newtons, Bacons, Boyles, Faradays, Harveys, Hunters, are Christians. If materialists have lost the spirit of divinity, is there neither spirit nor divinity for other men?" (Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," p. 15). Cf. "Christian Remembrancer," January, 1864, pp. 206, 207, where Dr. Cazenave, in a review of Ernest Renan's position, gives a somewhat similar appeal to the witness of great men of the past. See also a fine passage in "A Defence of the 'Eclipse of Faith'" (in reply to F. W. Newman's "Phases of Faith"), pp. 144, sqq.; so, too, Lacordaire, "Conférences" (Eng. transl., p. 216). See, too, Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," p. 16; who instances Milton, Bossuet, Leibnitz, Descartes, Haller, Pascal, Copernicus, Kepler, Bacon, Ray, Whewell, Faraday, and who cites Uhlhorn, "Die modernen Darstellungen des Lebens Jesu," pp. 143, sqq., for a similar catalogue.

presumption, deliberately sealed their folly or their dishonesty with the blood of martyrdom.

19. One other remark I will make of an equally general character, but of equal importance as regards the *a priori* credibility of miracles.

By the confession of men of science themselves, we live in a world of mystery. "Philosophy begins in wonder" is the axiom of the Greek thinker. "Omnia exeunt in mysterium"—all things issue in mystery—this is the verdict of the highest modern science. "Let us lower our heads and acknowledge our ignorance, one and all," is the advice of Prof. Tyndall.* "Life in all its forms . . . is confessedly a mystery," says Prof. St. George Mivart.† "The more you learn, the more you will be able to think how much remains unknown"—thus speaks Sir James Paget.‡ "He who will believe nothing but what he can explain may well be required to explain all that he does believe," is the terse aphorism of a writer in a recent philosophical magazine.§

* Addresses at Norwich, 1866 (quoted by Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," p. 34, note 2).

† "The Nineteenth Century," March, 1879, p. 488.

‡ "Theology and Science:" an address at the Leeds Clergy School, December, 1880, p. 27. "One great lesson of science is, how little we yet know and how much we have still to learn." (The concluding words of Sir John Lubbock's address at the fiftieth meeting of the British Association at York, 1881.)

§ "Contemporary Review."

"It is our irreverent familiarity with things that blinds us," writes James Hinton, of whom Sir William Gull has said that he was not only a man of science but a philosopher. "We cannot see," he says, "that we walk in the midst of miracles, and draw in mysteries with every breath."*

20. It is this grand and too often forgotten truth which has inspired the souls of all the greatest thinkers of the world; it was this for which, in our own times, men like Butler and Arnold, Kingsley and Carlyle, have so strenuously contended.†

And this, if honestly borne in mind, at once deprives miracles of much that prevents ordinary minds from conceiving their probability. If a man once realizes the miracles of common life,‡ the miracle of his own origin and existence, the miracle of his senses, and of the external world in which he lives and moves, the miracle of the

* "Life of James Hinton," by Ellice Hopkins, p. 60.

† Cf. quotations ap. Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," p. 33.

‡ "Quotidiana Dei miracula ex assiduitate viluerunt," Gregory, "Hom." XXVI. (quoted by Farrar). "The universe is one splendid, universal, all-comprehending miracle"—"The Supernatural in Nature," Reynolds, p. 468, who also quotes, p. 405, from Lessing:

"The greatest wonder
Is, that to us the real true wonders can
Become so commonplace."

harvest-field that feeds him, the miracle of the vineyard that gives him drink, the miracle of the sunlight that imparts its life to him, the miracle of his laughter and of his tears, of his intellect and of his will, of his faculties of body or soul—if he once realizes the miracles of his own experience, I say; he will be half way towards an intelligent belief in the far less marvellous miracles connected with the life and work of Jesus Christ.*

21. I cannot refrain from quoting here the eloquent words of Dr. Farrar in view of the miracles of the natural world: "The path of the lightning which shineth from the east even unto the west you can determine; and you can bind your messages upon the flaming wings wherewith at your bidding it will girdle the habitable globe; even of the wind which bloweth where it

* Cf. Macmillan, "Bible Teachings in Nature," Preface, pp. 6, sqq.: "The miracles of the Bible are . . . also exponents of the miracles of nature, experiments, as it were, made by the Great Teacher in person, on a small scale and within a limited time, to illustrate to mankind the phenomena that are taking place over longer periods throughout the universe. All creation is a standing wonder; but it needs other wonders to reveal it to our careless eyes and insensible hearts. It needs the sudden multiplication of the loaves and fishes at Capernaum to explain to us the mystery of the harvest of the land and the sea. It needs the miracle of Cana to show to us who it is that is gradually converting water into wine in every vineyard," etc. See also Charles Kingsley's Preface to his "Westminster Sermons."

listeth you can catalogue the causes and trace the course; but can you set the lark's song to determinate music as it flickers into the blue, or predict the beating of the eagle's wings as it soars upward amid the storm? You may number every bone and muscle of the ox or the elephant; but can you tell how, as the magic eddy of transformation weaves its unseen agency, the grass and the flower are transmuted indifferently into the juicy pulp or the solid ivory? That a dead man should come back to life you arrogantly declare to be inconceivable; is it more conceivable how from the void of non-existence a living soul was drawn? You pronounce it impossible that, after the rigor of death and the flaccidity of corruption, the veins should flush once more into healthy life; how is it more possible that in the womb of her that is with child should begin the *systolè* and the *dias-tolè* of the beating heart and the unapproachable individuality of the living soul?"*

22. Surely it is not to be criminally sanguine if, in view of what Science herself, the handmaid of theology, teaches us to-day, we confidently anticipate that the surest confirmation of the *bona fide* credibility of the Gospel miracles will ere long be vouchsafed by the students of phys-

* "Witness of History to Christ," F. W. Farrar, pp. 39, sqq.

ical science themselves.* Surely it will not be long before the proud dictum of the agnostic is recognized as fatally untrue: "Of all antagonisms of belief, the oldest, the widest, the most profound, and the most important is that between religion and science."†

My brothers, consider the star-studded canopy of the midnight, ponder the eternal marches

* "Religio ascensio mentis in Deum per scalas creatarum rerum" (Bacon, "Works," III., 357, ed. Spedding). Cf. Lecky, "History of Rationalism," I., 195. Eaton, "Bampton Lectures," 117, sq. "The time is approaching," says Sir J. Lubbock, "when it will be generally perceived that so far from science being opposed to religion, true religion without science is impossible" ("Origin of Civilization," p. 256). "The results of science," says Dr. Westcott, "are part of the data which it is the function of religion to coördinate" ("Contemporary Review," VIII., 377). It must be remembered that theology is at present enduring something of that high-handed treatment which her pseudo-champions were so lavish in inflicting upon science under the circumstances of mediæval ignorance. She must patiently abide her long-deferred retribution. "There have been martyrs *in science*," we are reminded by a Bampton lecturer, "no less than for religious belief" (Eaton, "Bampton Lectures," p. 107; cf. pp. 243, 247, etc.). Cf. Westcott, "Gospel of Resurrection," p. 48, etc. "The separation [of science and religion] has indeed been needful and eminently useful, but only as a temporary expedient. . . . The union is not optional. . . . Science is religious" (James Hinton, "Man and his Dwelling-place," Introduction, p. xxxv.). So Reynolds, "The Supernatural in Nature," *passim*, and especially pp. 1-56. For a valuable article on the mutual relations of science and theology, see "Church Quarterly Review," No. 1, pp. 36, sqq.

† Spencer, "First Principles," p. 12.

of the heavenly host, contemplate the multitudinous life of insects in the summer woodland, think of the myriad denizens of the ocean's depths, gaze upon the exquisite pencillings of nature's hand, the fantastic glories of flowers and fruits upspringing from the winter soil, consider the miracles of the world that God has made for *you* to enjoy, and then confess that *the mystery of death may be great, but the miracle of life is a greater mystery still*. "The first of miracles is God," says truly the French historian, Guizot;* "but there is a second—it is man."

23. That the position here assumed, namely, the high probability of a purely scientific confirmation of the Christian miracles, is not groundless is already abundantly manifest. As the laws of nature are more and more closely investigated they are seen to bring us to a point where miracles, in the ordinary use of the term, become possible "without any breach of continuity of the laws of the universe,"† and where a reception of those miracles "leads to no intellectual confusion."‡

24. So much, then—and short enough the

* "Médit. sur l'Ess. de la Rel. Chrét.," p. 257.

† "Unseen Universe," 8th edit., p. 248.

‡ *Ibid.*, Introd., p. 12. Cf. the recent work of the Rev. J. W. Reynolds on "The Supernatural in Nature: a Verification by Free Use of Science" (C. Kegan Paul & Co.), *passim*.

summary has been—as to the claim of Christ to work miracles.

We have glanced at the character and acknowledged the unique superiority of the wondrous life of Him who makes the claim; we have, further, seen that in themselves the miracles he was believed to work contain nothing incredible or impossible, on the assumption that God himself was their author.*

25. And thus the great arraignment gathers grandeur as the trial proceeds. We are confronted now, if never before, with the one credential which places the coping-stone on all his other wondrous claims.

We see him in the passage before us—recorded, let me remind you, *not* by John—as proving by a miracle of healing that he claimed the still more tremendous power of forgiving human sin. His words to the palsied patient are, “Thy sins

* The question of the greater or less credibility of one or another miracle connected with our Lord's life is here not entered upon. Most serious thinkers will agree with Canon Liddon that “if the resurrection be admitted to be a fact, it is puerile to object to the other miracles of Jesus” (“Bampton Lectures,” p. 155), and in days of loose processes of thought it is as well to remind ourselves that “a *denial* of the literal resurrection of the human body of Jesus involves nothing less than an absolute and total rejection of Christianity. All . . . the great heresies, even Socinianism, have believed” in this cardinal fact of the Christian history (*Ibid.*, p. 154); τί ἄπιστον κρίνεται παρ’ ὑμῖν, εἰ ὁ Θεὸς τοὺς νεκροὺς ἐγείρει, Acts 26: 8.

be forgiven thee." No wonder the scribes were startled at his audacity. "This man blasphemeth," is their opinion. But he proves his divine authority by the witness of the sudden cure of the palsied man.*

26. This, I need not remind you, is merely one out of the very large number of miracles with which the life of Jesus is surrounded. From birth to ascension that life is enveloped in the atmosphere of what would now be called "supernaturalism." To expel the miracles from that life would simply be to obliterate the Christ of the Gospels.†

* Cf. Farrar, "Life of Christ," Vol. I., pp. 422, sqq. Cf. Salvador ("Jésus Christ," II., 83, ap. Liddon): "Voilà pourquoi les docteurs se recrièrent de nouveau en entendant le Fils de Marie s'arroger à lui-même, et transmettre à ses délégués le droit du pardon : ils y voyaient une autre manière de prendre la place de Dieu."

† "Miracles cannot be torn from the life of Christ. His nature, character, teaching, wonders, constitute an unparalleled spiritual unity" (Stoughton, "Modern Skepticism," p. 216). So Pressensé: "Jésus ne s'est pas borné à enseigner la vérité aux hommes; il a encore fait des miracles. Il n'est pas possible, comme on l'a essayé souvent, de séparer ces deux portions de son œuvre. . . . Ses miracles font partie de son enseignement, car il les a constamment invoqués comme preuve de sa divine mission," etc. ("Jésus Christ," p. 373). Cf. Plumptre, "Christ and Christendom," p. 177. So Lacordaire, "Conférences" (Eng. transl.): "The gospel resists that analysis which pretends to extract from it the moral substance and put aside the miraculous substance; to take from the worker of miracles the support of the sage, and from the sage the support of the worker of miracles," etc. (p. 48).

27. What, then, must be our conclusion in view of all this? Let Dr. Liddon summarize the argument. In view of Christ's unquestionable claim to work and to be himself the embodiment of startling miracles, Canon Liddon asks, "Was he, then, the ignorant victim and promoter of a crude superstition? or was he, as M. Renan considers, passive and unresisting while credited with working wonders which he knew to be merely thaumaturgic tricks? On either supposition is it possible to uphold him as 'the moral ideal of humanity,' or indeed as the worthy object of any true moral enthusiasm?" *

No, my hearers, the moral perfection of Christ's character stands or falls with the *bona fide* reality of his miracles.

And of those miracles themselves let Dr. Schenkel, a German rationalist, speak: "They are prodigies," he says, "works which Omnipotence alone could achieve."†

* "Bampton Lectures," p. 161. For an able criticism of M. Renan's position in regard to the miracles of Christ, see Dr. Tulloch's "Lectures on M. Renan's Vie de Jésus," *passim*, especially p. 204. "There can be only one possible explanation of miraculous claims such as these consistently with the honesty of the person who makes them, namely, their reality. The idea of mere enthusiasm or of lofty self-exaltation will in no degree explain them. From such enthusiasm . . . the character of Christ is singularly free." Cf. pp. 152, 153.

† Cf. Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 153.

28. Let us further remember, with due reverence, that writers of every school admit that under no conceivable circumstances could God appear in human flesh without the accompaniment of miracles such as are in fact attributed by history to Jesus Christ. Conversely, we may add with a modern writer, that "if the divine mission of Christ be admitted, the reason for his miraculous power becomes at once apparent."*

29. It is further to be noted that the founders of other great religions—Confucius, Sakya Mouni, Zoroaster, Mohammed—made no such claim to miracles as Christ assumed.† While their systems abound in strange and meaningless marvels fastened upon the founder by later legends,‡

* "Gospel for the Nineteenth Century," p. 12. "It appears to us," say two scientific writers, "that Christ, if he came to us from the invisible world, could hardly (with reverence be it spoken) have done so without some peculiar sort of communication being established between the two worlds" ("Unseen Universe," p. 248).

† Mohammed expressly disclaims the power of working miracles. See, for example, Sale's "Koran," ch. 13, p. 201 (edit. quarto); 17: 232; 29: 328; so 5, 10, 18, 6, 3, 21, 28, 16 (quoted by Paley, "Evidences," p. 342, edited by Rev. G. Fisk). Cf. McIlvaine, "New York Lectures on Evidences of Christ," Lecture VI., p. 151. Cf. Bosworth Smith's "Royal Institution Lectures, Mohammed and Mohammedanism," pp. 188, sqq., and Sir William Muir, "Life of Mahomet," *passim*.

‡ As to the "absurdities and extravagances" in the sacred books of the Buddhists, see "The Legends and Theories of the Buddhists compared with History and Science,"

Christianity stands upon the unique foundation of works of mercy wrought before the eyes of numberless contemporary witnesses.

30. For, finally, let us remember that Christ, "surrounded as he was by the immense publicity of furious Jews and haughty Romans and sneering Greeks, not only claimed miracles, but his claim was undisputed by his deadliest enemies."*

by R. Spence Hardy, p. 135, and *passim*. Dr. Chadwick ("Christ Bearing Witness to Himself," pp. 131, sqq.) gives a concise and valuable summary of the whole question of the differences and resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity. "The Buddhist legends," says Mr. Max Müller, "teem with miserable miracles attributed to Buddha and his disciples—miracles which, for wonders, certainly surpass the miracles of any other religion. Yet in their own sacred canon a saying of Buddha is recorded prohibiting his disciples from working miracles" ("Science of Religion," p. 27). See also Mr. Rhys Davids' work on "Buddhism" (S. P. C. K.), especially ch. 7, pp. 179-199. Mr. Edwin Arnold's poem, "The Light of Asia, or The Great Renunciation" (Trübner, 6th edit., 1881), will probably be familiar to many readers. If, as the press critiques assert, this poem is a really reliable description of the legend of the Buddha, Christians will thank Mr. Arnold for his valuable contribution to "orthodox" apologetics. Few could read his beautiful lines without an ever-deepening conviction of the fundamental contrast between the fantastic and sensuous imagery of the Buddhist *legend* and the solemn supernaturalism of the Christian *history*. See also V. Fausböll's "Buddhist Birth Stories," trans. by Rhys Davids, vol. I., *passim*, for example p. 134, end.

* Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," p. 73. Cf. Lacordaire, "Conférences," Eng. trans., pp. 53, etc., especially 199. "Talmudical writings imply that Jesus of Nazareth did many mighty works. The "Toldoth Jeschu" relates a num-

They saw, however, that he steadily declined to use his supernatural power in his own behalf; they felt safe from it, because they knew that he never used it against his enemies; and then they "learned gradually to treat him, even while they acknowledged his extraordinary power, with a reckless animosity which they would have been afraid to show towards an ordinary enemy. With curious inconsistency they openly charged him with being leagued with the devil; in other words, they acknowledged that he was capable of boundless mischief, and yet they were so little afraid of him that they were ready to provoke him to use his whole power against themselves."*

31. And thus, once more, we see how entirely consistent they were in getting rid of him. We cannot forget that the supernatural power of Christ was regarded at first often with as much of alarm, distress, and horror as of reverence.

ber of things, such as raising the dead, healing lepers, restoring the lame. It represents people as falling down before Him exclaiming, 'Truly thou art the Son of God.' The Christian miracles are allowed, but are attributed to magic" (Stoughton, "The Miraculous Testimony," etc., "Modern Skepticism," p. 205). Dr. Stoughton quotes a valuable series of testimonies from Jewish and pagan authorities as to this point. Celsus "acknowledges that Christ wrought miracles. . . . He tries to account for them by ascribing them to magic" (McIlvaine, "Lectures," No. VI., p. 171).

* "Ecce Homo," p. 46.

And ultimately the leaders of the Jews, terrified, as we may well believe, as much as angered, were fain to denounce him as a sorcerer and an impostor: "He hath a devil;" "He casteth out devils by the prince of the devils."*

* "Have Celsus, Porphyrius, Julian . . . denied that Christ wrought miracles? No more than the Jews: they have simply made a skilful magician of Him. . . . It was possible to pervert his miraculous works; it was not possible to be silent in regard to them (Lacordaire, "Conférences," Eng. trans., p. 52). For a critical review of the various "Assaults on the Miracles," see Trench, "Miracles," Introductory Essay, pp. 60, sqq. He divides the assailants into seven classes: (a) *Jewish*; on this he takes the obvious position that "a rigid monotheism left but one way of escape from the authority of miracles," namely, that which our Lord's adversaries *did* say, i. e., "that these works were works of hell" (Matt. 12:24; Mark 3:22-27; Luke 11:15-22). [Dr. Trench cites some valuable quotations on this point.] (b) The *Heathen* (Celsus, Hierocles, Porphyry), who did not *deny* the miracles any more than the Jews, but, like them, attributed them to magic; though, unlike them, they denied that *divinity* was the necessary sequel of their admission. (c) The *Pantheistic* (Spinoza), who deny that any miracle is *possible*, in view of the unchangeable order of the universe as arranged by God. (d) The *Skeptical* (Hume), who, as we have seen, deny that *any evidence* can avail to make a miracle credible. (e) Those who (like Schleiermacher) assert "the miracles only *relatively* miraculous;" that is, that they anticipated the future discoveries of science. This theory of course "implies a serious moral charge" against Christ; and "in the kingdom of truth to use artifices like these were nothing else but by lies to seek to overturn the kingdom of lies." (f) The *Rationalistic* (Paulus), who wish to retain "the good faith, the honesty, the entire credibility" of the Scriptural writers, while eliminating all the "divine" or "supernatural." (g)

32. Will this alternative satisfy you?

Surely not. Taking into consideration the other historical features of his life, you dare not surely join in that ribald and outrageous taunt. Surely the charge of demonology is not one you will venture to bring against the Author of the Sermon on the Mount; surely you will not dare to say that Christendom is built upon the necromancy of a wizard or the jugglery of an accomplished charlatan, reared forsooth in the carpenter's shop of a Galilean village!

33. It is time surely for the cultivation of some other virtue besides that of mere intellectual criticism. Surely now, as we are drawing nearer the bitter crisis of his life,* it is time, my hearers, for any half-hearted ones to lay aside the scalpel of the critical anatomist and to begin to pray for the grace of *humility*!

God help us now and for ever to dissipate the spectral shadows of an utterly needless doubt in regard to the tremendous *fact* of the miracles of Jesus Christ!

God help us to see that for one difficulty of the ancient belief of the church on the matter

The *Historico-critical* (Woolston, Strauss), who insist that the miracles cannot be real, but that they possess a spiritual significance.

* Spoken shortly before Good Friday, 1881.

there are a score of difficulties raised by anti-Christian explanations of those beliefs.*

34. So that when it becomes clear to us that Christ himself explicitly claims to be in co-equal and co-eternal deity with God the Father Almighty, our hearts as well as our critical faculties may be attuned to the confession of St. Peter, "Thou art indeed the Christ, the Son of God." For assuredly the study of the miracles of our Lord "can have but one result for those who honestly believe in the literal reality of the wonders described: it must force upon them a conviction of the divinity of the Worker."†

* For a summary exposition of the mutual self-destruction of rival skepticisms, see Birks, "Supernatural Religion," ch. 6 and 7, also p. 75, and ch. 15. See Lacordaire, "Conférences," Eng. trans. (Chapman and Hall, 1875): "on the efforts of rationalism to destroy, pervert, and explain the life of Jesus Christ," pp. 174, sqq. Cf. Dean Milman's review of Strauss in his "History of Christianity," Book I., ch. 2, appendix I. (pp. 109, sqq.).

† Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 158.

VI.

CHRIST CLAIMS TO BE GOD: "EQUAL
TO THE FATHER AS TOUCHING HIS
GODHEAD;" AND IS EXECUTED AS
A BLASPHEMER.

"NOW YE HAVE HEARD HIS BLASPHEMY.
WHAT THINK YE? THEY ANSWERED, . . . HE IS
GUILTY OF DEATH."—MATT. 26:65, 66.

"If our Lord was not more than man, he was less than a good man."—MacColl, "Ripon Lectures," Rivington's, 1890.)

"Le Bouddhisme n'a pas divinisé le Bouddha. . . . Le Bouddha reste homme. . . . Ni l'orgueil de Çākya Mouni, ni le fanatisme des croyants, n'a conçu un sacrilège. . . . Jamais personne n'a songé à le faire un Dieu."—ST. HILAIRE.

"The charge of an extravagant self-deluding enthusiasm is the last to be fastened on Jesus."—CHANNING.

"Christ risen: Christ divine: such is the sum of the ancient creed."—ARCHBISHOP THOMSON.

"We must advance with the assurance, whatever may result from it, that he, Jesus of Nazareth, being what we see he is, claimed for himself oneness with the Eternal God."—G. S. DREW, "Reasons of Faith," p. 100.

"Who was right, the high-priest or Christ? This is . . . the great, the momentous alternative."—RIGGENBACH.

"Can we wonder that the Jews . . . were utterly shocked, and called this blasphemy? . . . He pushed the mystery into an absolute paradox, and they take up stones to cast at him.

" . . . He is on his trial. . . . Out of his own mouth they would fain have evidence. . . . The high-priest, therefore, puts him upon oath, adjures him by the living God to tell the court whether he be or no, in this sense, the Son of God. Death is the penalty if he answers 'Yes.' He accepts the oath, . . . and dies a martyr to this truth."—J. P. NORRIS.

"Either Jesus Christ is God or he is not; there is no third alternative." Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 532. (14th ed., 1890.)

CHRIST'S CLAIM OF CO-EQUAL GOD- HEAD WITH HIS FATHER IN WIT- NESS TO THE GREAT DILEMMA.

I. THE evidence we are now to consider in regard to the personal claims of the historical Christ will add nothing to our argument which it did not really contain before. Our proposition is, that our Lord openly and in so many words avowed his own divinity: that this is the plain meaning of his words to us, as it certainly was to the Jews. They executed him for nothing else. As he was being racked in the death-agony, this was the sum total of their reviling: "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." This was their express declaration: "He said, I am the Son of God."* *They* never understood his claims to be anything short of an undisguised pretension to divinity. And *they*, at any rate, had every facility for a clear understanding of what he did or did not claim to be.

So that any man who in our age rejects the divinity of our Lord must of course be prepared to assert that his contemporaries were, after all, mistaken; he must explain why, if Christ did

* Matt. 27:43.

not make claim to co-equal Godhead with the Almighty, he yet deliberately allowed the Jews to kill him for what he never claimed; to kill him, I say, for a mutual *mistake*; which as a mere man he would have been the first to rectify, and could have rectified by even *once* distinctly repudiating divine honors.*

2. Nevertheless, the proof of this stupendous claim does *not* rest on the mere verbal self-proclamation of Christ as a divine being. As regarding the truth which these addresses are intended to illustrate, the subject now before us is in no sense what some may naturally suppose it must be, viz., the last and most important link in the chain of our argument. That chain is quite complete without any direct or formal assertion of his divine claims by our Lord himself. Our inference is based *not* upon the isolated *words* of Jesus Christ, but upon the moral and intellectual attitude which, not by the language of his lips alone, but far more by the whole tenor of his life, he consistently assumed. To forget this would be to underrate the real strength of the Christian position. A king is not the less a king because he is not for ever carrying his *title* in his mouth: he assumes his monarchy, and every act and word reveals that

* See Archbishop Whately's Essay, "Christ's Own Account of his Person," in "the kingdom of Christ," pp. 17, sqq.

he is a king, without the aid of verbal definitions : a king he is, and a king he remains, even though he should never once proclaim the fact in so many words.

3. It would, so far as the truth of our Lord's divinity is concerned, be a matter of absolute indifference if it could be proved that he never once directly asserted his divinity. By bearing this in view we throw upon those who reject Christianity as a divine religion the *onus* of accounting for each one of the extraordinary pretensions which Christ assumed at every turn throughout his wondrous life on earth.

So that I must ask you to remember that, however unanswerable those facts themselves may be which we shall shortly consider, we could yet afford to dispense with them altogether, and still leave the truth of our Lord's perfect Godhead absolutely unimpaired.

4. Thus, then, except for the purposes of logical formality, the argument of to-day is actually superfluous. It has been *implied* all along. So far from being a mere *link* in the chain of reasoning, the dogmatic truth of our Lord's perfect Godhead is, in fact, the very *anchor* itself, without which the chain of Christian evidences has no meaning whatever. It is, I say, the anchor of the church of God: the anchor apart from which that chain which the hammer

of criticism has forged must hang idly in the dark tide of human history; the anchor without which the vessel of all human hope must for ever be abandoned—without which the ark of God's church must drift, a phantom ship, looming through the haze of our credulity, a spectral apparition, doomed for ever to be driven over the surface of a God-forsaken ocean of bewilderment; blown hither and thither, a thing of terror to the baffled mariner, by every changing wind of human speculation.

5. So, then, at the outset let us bear in mind that each of the previously considered personal claims of Jesus Christ directly implies this, the crown and end of our whole momentous argument.

No one but God is entirely free from sin, and yet the words of Christ stand unchallenged by his worst enemies: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"*

No one but God might venture to imply that all the wisdom of Gentile sages, all the venerable and sacred lore of Jewish Rabbis, was realized in the person of himself; yet this, and nothing less than this, was implied in his claim to be the very incarnation of the Truth.†

No one but God himself could dare to supersede and fulfil the divine legislation of the

* Lecture I.

† Lecture II.

Jews as their predicted Messiah ; yet this, as we know, was what Christ dared to do.*

No one but God himself could substantiate a claim to the universal homage of mankind as King and Judge of all the world ; yet the pretensions of Christ aimed at nothing short of this.†

Who, again, may or can claim to forgive sins save God alone ? Yet this was, as is perfectly certain, one of the most frequent claims of Jesus Christ.‡

Lastly, who save the Author of life, the Lord of nature, the omnipotent Ruler of the universe, the Lord God Jehovah, could, by the mere exercise of his authority, so concentrate into a moment the laws of the natural world as to hasten their action before the eyes of men, and thus enact physical wonders such as no science can imitate, and yet such as no science can disprove ?§

6. Remembering, then, that the explicit assertion of his own divine nature will but logically formulate a truth which has been latent in every stage of the preceding argument, we may now proceed to consider what is also true, namely, that by his own direct and perfectly straightforward words he again and again requires us to confess the same overpowering fact.||

* Lecture III.

† Lecture IV.

‡ Lecture V.

§ Lecture V.

|| " In identifying himself with the Jehovah and the Word

7. When a man like Mr. John Stuart Mill can admit that, even "to the conception of a rational skeptic, it remains a possibility that Christ actually was what he supposed himself to be," and yet can actually dare to say—in the same sentence, in words which perhaps many an honest but feeble doubter will believe to be literally true simply because they are printed in a work of Mr. Mill's*—that Christ "never made the smallest pretension" to be God "and would probably have thought such a pretension as blasphemous as it seemed to the men who condemned him,"† I confess one hardly knows which is the more astonishing phenomenon—the fact that Mr. Mill must have deliberately set aside, or at best have unconsciously ignored, many of the direct of the Old Testament, Jesus assumed the name and the attributes of God not only by implication; . . . he constantly spoke of himself as being, emphatically and in the highest conceivable sense, the Son of God. . . This assumption on his part is as certain as anything written in the history."—G. S. Drew, "Reasons of Faith," p. 98.

* "Posthumous Essays on Religion," p. 255; such, too, as is well known, is the contention of Dr. Priestley, in his "Corruptions of Christianity:" see his opening remarks, Part I. (p. 1, etc., ed. 1871).

† It is needless to point out the extraordinary perversion of even Mr. Mill's logical acumen which this statement reveals. Admitting that Christ's contemporaries understood him to make divine pretensions, Mr. Mill has the courage to assert that Christ never claimed divinity. A nineteenth-century jury would not have much difficulty in deciding between conflicting testimonies here submitted to them.

assertions of our Lord, besides shutting his eyes to the far more important argument that is contained by the whole consistent supernaturalism of his life: or the credulity of those, if any there be, who, in the face of the Gospel history, can ever again trust Mr. Mill in the constructions which he places upon Christian doctrine if he can thus shelter a self-evident error under the sanction of his much-respected name as a logician and philosopher.

These are strong terms, and until I can substantiate them they will doubtless savor of a very unwarrantable arrogance in myself.

8. Gladly will I bear this suspicion if you will be content to judge between Mr. Mill and the facts I now lay before you.

The most casual reader of the Gospels will remember that the Christ habitually presents himself as claiming a dignity and supremacy far beyond that of ordinary persons, however exalted in rank; "as far exceeding in dignity the most illustrious of human kings, prophets, or legislators."* These passages, honestly translated, mean nothing less than Christ's divinity; but I shall not recall them to you here.† Passing by,

* Blunt's "Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology," p. 212.

† See, *e.g.*, Matt. 4:7, 10, 19; 5:17, sqq.; 8:22; 9:9; 10:22, 32-35, 37-40; 11:2-6, 27-30; 12:50; 13:57; 14:22-33; 16:24;

also, those passages where Christ presents himself (metaphorically or otherwise) as "the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Light, the Fountain of Salvation to mankind,"* let us glance at some of the most familiar passages in his life in which he directly claims, by implication, "an authority and dignity which belong to God," and to God "alone."†

9. Leaving, for the present, the unanswerable evidence contained in the fourth Gospel (which Mr. Mill presumably rejected as unauthentic—too hastily, if so, as he would have admitted if he had lived until to-day), let us take only a sample of those claims as they stand recorded by St. Matthew and St. Mark.

His words shall simply stand without present note or comment. "All power," he says (Matt.

18:20; 19:13, 21, 28, 29; 20:20-28, etc. So Mark 2:14; 3:35; 6:1-4, etc. Luke 4:18-24; 5:27, etc. John 1:43, etc.

* Blunt, *loc. cit.*

† "What is the spirit of all the three [synoptical Gospels]? It is this: they describe and attempt to delineate a Man that spoke, with an authority of his own, of the secrets of God's Spirit. At times He forgives sins, and treats the healing of bodily diseases as a mere pledge of that deeper power to restore health to the spirit. At times he speaks of his own lowliness: but though always with a humility of a son towards God, it is in the attitude of a king towards men. 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.' What an assertion for any man, however good, to make! . . . an assertion only the more inconsistent

28:18), "is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath day." "Thy sins be forgiven thee." In claiming to be the Messiah* (Mark 8:29, 30; 12:6; 14:62) he claimed to be the Lord God whom David worshipped, Mark 12:35, 36. "How say the scribes," he asks, "that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself, . . . by the Holy Ghost, . . . calleth him Lord. . . ." So, in the judgment hall, the high-priest directly understands his awful claim when he warns the Sanhedrin that they should see him as the "Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." When he invited his disciples to state what the Jewish public thought of his personality,† and when, putting aside the answer he received, to the effect that the people thought he must be John the Baptist, or if not Elijah or Jeremiah, he must be *one of the*

and incredible the better he might be. [This and similar phraseology] is not the language of a servant of God, but of One who shares his eternal attributes," etc.—R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," I, 245, sqq.

* A distinguished philologist, assuming nothing but philological axioms in investigating the Old Testament, writes of the divinity of the Messiah, as announced in Isaiah, thus: "Both parts of Isaiah give us to understand clearly that the Agent of Jehovah . . . is himself divine" (T. K. Cheyne, "The Prophecies of Isaiah," vol. II., p. 187). Cf. Hengstenberg on the Christology of the Old Testament, III., 88.

† Matt. 16:13, sqq.

prophets, he received the direct confession of Peter to his divinity, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—so far from resenting the claim (as common truth or common modesty would have instantly bidden him to do if it had not been justified in fact), the Christ simply accepted the homage as the very foundation of his future acceptance with the world: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven: . . . and on this rock I will build my church."*

Time would fail me if I recounted to you the many other occasions when the Christ thus deliberately implies that his position of authority and royalty is such as by universal consent none else but God may dare to aspire to.†

Now every one of these passages is taken

* Matt. 16:17, 18. Cf. Matt. 11:27, 28, of which verse Keim [II., 187] says that it is "rank treason" to doubt its genuineness.

† "[The Gospel] calls for a faith in Christ absolute, universal, permanent; . . . it refuses to believe him . . . anything less than the only-begotten Son of God. If it be asked on what ground does it make that claim, the answer is that it is Christ who makes it for himself . . . The question does not turn upon the criticism of this or that passage in the New Testament. Study the record of our Lord's teaching in whatever form you will, . . . the fact remains that he preaches himself. . . He puts forward his claim to an absolute faith as the true Revealer of God, the true Mediator between God and man, and the true Lord and Judge of all creatures to the end of time.

from St. Matthew or St. Mark, and may be found repeated, implied, illustrated, or amplified both there and in St. Luke's Gospel.

10. I have said not a word, so far, of the fourth Gospel.

But, as I have reminded you more than once in the course of these addresses, we have evidence to-day such as renders any hesitation as to the authenticity of St. John absolutely needless. If here and there there lingers a very natural hesitation, among certain skeptics, to admit the Gospel of St. John to be a genuine record, yet, since the publication of Dr. Westcott's "Introduction* to St. John" and the still more recent (1890) Bampton Lectures of Archdeacon Watkins, and in view of the frank avowal of Ewald, and others of rationalistic tendency, this hesitation need weigh very little with us, especially when we remember that to accept St. John as a genuine

... We cannot ignore the claim. . . If it be not true, so that it is the very life of our souls to accept it with unreserved devotion, it must be what we hardly dare to name—the wildest dream of infatuation or the presumption of an almost blasphemous imposture" (Barry, "Boyle Lectures," 1877-78, "On the Manifold Witness for Christ," pp. 348-350). Dr. Barry, it need hardly be said, amply vindicates the Christ from either of the two alternatives (infatuation or imposture) here indicated (*Ibid.* pp. 351, 352).

* See Lecture I., pp. 57-64, and notes thereon: compare the "Quarterly Review" for April, 1881, p. 378, where full justice is done to the eminent work here referred to.

authority logically means to admit the divinity of our Lord without a moment's doubt.*

11. Now, although, as Dr. Westcott remarks, it is true that "the Person" of Christ "is as truly the centre of the three Synoptists" as of St. John; although, that is, as I have reminded you, "the claims of the Lord which are recorded by the Synoptists, if followed to their legitimate consequences, involve the claims recorded by St. John;"† yet throughout St. John we have an

* For a valuable contribution to the questions here involved, see Dr. Chadwick's "Christ bearing Witness to Himself," Lecture III., pp. 61-95. At page 88 he makes the following significant quotation from Schenkel: "The fourth Gospel is a really *historical* source for a representation of the character of Christ, but in a *higher, spiritualized* sense of the word. Without this Gospel, the unfathomable depth, the inaccessible height, of the character of the Saviour of the world would be wanting to us, and his boundless influence, renewing all humanity, would for ever remain a mystery. . . . The representation of the character of Jesus becomes essentially true only in the heavenly splendor of that light which streams forth from the fourth Gospel."

† "Introduction to St. John," p. lxxxiv.; so Row, "The Jesus of the Evangelists," p. 241. "The distinction between St. John and the Synoptics is one of formal statement rather than of substance. . . . The dramatized conception of the Jews of the Synoptics and that of the fourth Gospel are based on exactly the same principles." Even Strauss, as Dr. Chadwick has pointed out, admits that "the fundamental principles of the earlier Gospels are in close connection with those of the later" ("New Life of Jesus," II. 179, II. 4, quoted by Chadwick, "Christ bearing Witness to Himself," p. 72). Cf. R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," vol. I. p. 244. "As St.

ever-flowing stream of direct testimony such as nothing but wilfulness can ignore or explain away.

Passing by his acceptance of Nathanael's confession in the first chapter (1:49), passing by his solemn words to Nicodemus in the third (3:18), let us notice other still more obvious assertions by our Lord of his divinity. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me," are words which in the fourteenth chapter* are but the keynote of a tremendous audacity if so be he were not co-equal with the Father. For when Philip preferred the request to him, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" is the thrilling reply. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father: and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" Again, in the same chapter, a few verses later, he explains to St. Jude, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." What! shall the speaker who dares to

John's Gospel . . . is doubted by many sincere critics who accept the first three as genuine, I could scarcely rest my faith on it did it not seem to me that the other three . . . are full of the same truth [of the Incarnation]," etc. See Dr. Salmon's remarks on this subject, in his "Introduction" to the New Testament (4th edit., 1889), pp. 212-221.

* John 14:1, sqq.; cf. 6:40, 47; 5:23; 8:42, etc.

speak thus be considered anything else than a blasphemous enthusiast, if he be not verily and indeed justified in associating himself (however holy he may be as a *man*) with the sacred and eternal presence of the Father of all spirits?

12. I can but leave some of the other numerous passages from St. John to speak for themselves: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself *equal with God*" (John 5:17). "I proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:42). "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (5:22). "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (4:26). "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM" (8:57). "He that hateth me hateth my Father also" (15:23). "I and my Father are one. . . . The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God*" (10:30, etc.). "Thom-

as said unto Him, My Lord and *my God*. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed "(20: 28).*

Such are some of the direct and immediate declarations by our Lord himself as to his true personality.

13. Speaking upon this dogmatic assertion by our Lord of his divinity, Canon Liddon shows, in his fourth lecture, that this great truth is discovered to the Jews by three distinct methods of statement:

(a.) By placing himself on terms of *co-equality* with the Father.†

(b.) Secondly, by asserting his essential *unity* with the Father. And this unity is, as Canon Liddon shows, of a kind not to be mistaken for mere mystical or metaphorical union. From the peculiar phrase employed by Christ,‡ the Jews at once understood the full significance of his

* Cf. Pearson on "The Creed," 4th edit., Oxford, pp. 231, 232, notes 26 and 27.

† He claims a parity of working power, and he claims an equal right to the homage of mankind, p. 179. John 5: 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 28, 29.

‡ Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἑσμεν, John 10: 30. "Deny this dynamic unity, and you destroy the internal connection of the passage. Admit this dynamic unity, and you admit, by necessary implication, a unity of essence. . . . His words gave them fair ground for saying that 'being man, he made himself God'" (John 10: 33).—Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," pp. 183, 184.

language. As jealous monotheists, they failed to allow in his words any abatement of a claim which they at once pronounced to be one of preposterous blasphemy. They had no difficulty in understanding him to mean "that he was himself a divine person."* And he never disclaimed the full responsibility of permitting them to remain in that belief.

(c.) Thirdly, Christ not only claims co-equality and unity with the Father, but, further, he announces his actual *preëxistence* from all eternity.† In language which could not fail to carry with it to Jewish ears the tremendous prerogative of Jehovah's eternal existence and glory, he avowed himself to be the I AM of ancient Israel.‡

* *Ibid.*, p. 186.

† John 8: 51-58. See Lacordaire, "Conférences," English transl., pp. 136, sqq., on the "Preëxistence of Jesus Christ." After tracing the historical progress of the Messianic hopes in the Jewish life "during the course of the 2,000 years which preceded Jesus Christ" (p. 167), M. Lacordaire continues: "That Messianic idea, so extraordinary in its universality, its progress, its perseverance, and its precision, is at length fulfilled? Yes. . . . The one God, Creator of the Hebraic Bible, has become the God of nearly all the earth. . . . And who has accomplished this incredible revolution? . . . Christ, . . . a Jew, of the tribe of Judah, of the house of David. And how? . . . By suffering and dying as David, Isaiah, Daniel had foretold. . . . The proportions of the work of Christ in the times which preceded him are yet more striking than all the divine proportions of his life and his after life," etc., pp. 167, 168, 171.

‡ Canon Liddon compares with this our Lord's references

14. Now, in face of all this, any reasonable or candid student of Christ's life must surely see that Mr. Mill's assertion as to our Lord's silence upon the subject of his claim to be divine is utterly contrary, not only to the plainest *facts* of his life and teaching, but to his very *words* as well.

But however he or any other may ignore or rationalize away those facts, the Jews themselves at once recognized the full bearing of his claims.* They saw that not by direct word of mouth alone, but by the posture of his entire life, he assumed to be the divine Son of God. "And a very accomplished Jew of our own day, M. Salvador, has shown that this . . . was the real point at issue," at his trial before the Sanhedrin. "He maintains," what I have consistently emphasized throughout these addresses, "that a Jew had no logical alternative to belief in the Godhead of Jesus Christ except the imperative duty of putting him to death."†

15. I am not, of course, unaware that this to his preëxistence as implied in his two great Sacramental discourses, John 3 : 13, and 6 : 44, sqq.

* "No candid reader can doubt . . . that the Jews understood him to claim . . . a divine character. And he himself must have *known* that they so understood him," etc. Whately, "Kingdom of Christ," pp. 23, 24.

† Salvador, "Jésus Christ," II., 132, etc., quoted by Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," p. 191. The Jews persecuted Christ "because he made himself, as they said truly, equal with God. . . . Modern skeptics of loftier strain feel this keenly. They

great dilemma must savor, to a certain highly cultured school of literary critics, of a crude "Philistinism" altogether unworthy of the "sweet reasonableness" of their own views upon the subject. To Mr. Matthew Arnold the awful alternative here depicted must needs become sublimated into an interesting point of metaphysics to be interpreted by that hyper-intellectual "*zeitgeist*" of which he is so gifted an exponent. I must, however, beg to be permitted to retain, in the interests of the uninitiated *many* who have not yet soared into the subtleties of the *Glaube* and *Aberglaube*, my own very rough-and-ready conviction that if the Resurrection, the Miracles, the Atonement, the Incarnation be what Mr. Arnold declares them to be, his own elegant phraseology notwithstanding, the Christian's faith is a gross and blasphemous delusion, and that no rhetorical or literary jugglery can soften

might be content to accept him as a moral teacher. . . . If they reject him it is simply or mainly, as they will tell you, because he claims to be, . . . as they well know, . . . no less than God."—Cook (in "Modern Skepticism Lectures," p. 489). "The Jews," writes Mrs. Magnus, "recognized in him only a human and not a divine Being, and consequently the denial of his divinity was inevitable, while the responsibility of his death was not theirs" ("About the Jews," p. 67, C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1881.) Mrs. Magnus cites (note, *Ibid.*) some apt quotations in support of this. This argument is well worked out by Archbishop Whately, in his "Kingdom of Christ," pp. 13-43 (3d edit., 1842).

the rugged outlines of the self-same dilemma which is here honestly and plainly (however imperfectly) put forth.

The author of "Literature and Dogma" may content himself if he can with his own idealism, in view of the realities of evil and in sight of the facts of ordinary experience. As a protest against a slavish literalism or a craven superstition, Mr. Arnold's views of Christian truth are indeed valuable and instructive, but as a practical explanation for practical people of the phenomena of eighteen centuries of history, no mere abstractions will explain away Mr. Arnold's own admission that "for His disciples, and for Christendom after them, Jesus was and is the Christ."*

16. Nothing short of the personal union of God and man in the person of the Christ can, I verily believe, satisfy the requirements of all the facts before us. If it be objected that the Christ may have been a "perfect Example," without being wholly divine, it must be remembered that to see such an example is, practically, to adore; and such adoration is certainly blasphemous if it be directed to any object other than God himself.†

17. With a view to this conclusion, the argument of these addresses may be formulated in the strict language of logical inference.

* "Literature and Dogma," p. 221.

† Cf. "Gospel for the Nineteenth Century," p. 321.

We have reviewed the evidence, hostile as well as friendly, that is furnished by history and reason in regard to the premises from which that inference is drawn. It is admitted that a certain historical personage laid claim, directly and indirectly, to certain personal attributes or characteristic qualities.

Those qualities are of a kind such as are never found united in any other person whose life is recorded in history, and are, in fact, such as by universal consent belong only to one supreme Being, the eternal God himself.

The conclusion is sufficiently obvious.*

18. Here, then, we must needs leave the great indictment ; not, as you may well suppose, by rea-

* See Mill's "Logic," vol. I., p. 200, where the author demonstrates that every syllogism comes within the following general formula :—

"Attribute A is a mark of attribute B ;

The given object has the mark A ;

Therefore,

The given object has the attribute B."

How entirely the argument before us might shape itself upon these lines it would be needless to point out, except for the convenience of those who are apt to deny that logic has any part in the conclusions of theology. Thus : By universal consent, certain attributes belong to Almighty God, and to him alone ;

By the admission of his accusers

Jesus Christ, alone in history, has proved his claim to possess those attributes ;

Therefore,

Jesus Christ has the attributes of the divine Being.

son of scarcity of matter for further illustration of the argument, but for the obvious necessity of not trespassing longer upon your indulgence.

19. One word. I feel, however, to be absolutely necessary in view of the one only escape which has been suggested as possible from the destructive dilemma which I have thus unworthily placed before you now in six several aspects.*

I refer, perhaps I need hardly say, to the well-worn theories which rationalism keeps dressing up ever in new and less consistent guises, and which place Christ upon the same level as the Buddha or any other great human teacher.

According to this theory, which in some shape more or less fanciful pervades all anti-Christian schools of thought, Jesus Christ was "deified by the enthusiasm of his first disciples."

* It cannot, I think, be necessary to discuss the theory that Christ was One who, as M. Renan suggests, deliberately connived at falsehood and imposture. Instances have already been given of this theory in the notes to these lectures. Dr. Chadwick ("Christ bearing Witness to Himself") has exposed in trenchant terms the utterly inconsistent attitude here assumed by M. Renan, and well appeals (p. 110) to the far nobler position of Strauss, who admits that "with a Personality such as that of Jesus there cannot be a question of adaptation, of playing a part" ("New Life," I., 312, II., 176). See also Cazenove's able review of Renan's "Vie de Jésus" in the "Christian Remembrancer," No. 123 (Jan., 1864), and especially pp. 213-216; and R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," No. IX. vol. I., pp. 262, sqq., on "M. Renan's Christ."

We are seriously asked to believe* that Christ himself was a monomaniac, a deluded fanatic, who gradually believed himself to be inspired of God, and around whose brow the passionate enthusiasm of his disciples placed the halo of divinity.†

20. Now, in this place, and under the limits of my present discourse, I shall simply content myself with a rejoinder which a professed skeptic, Rousseau, shall supply; namely, that "the gospel has characters of truthfulness so great and striking, so perfectly inimitable, that its inventor would have been more astonishing than its hero."‡

* Cf. Farrar, "The Witness of History to Christ," pp. 55, sqq.

† M. Renan thinks that owing to the peculiar scenery of northern Palestine, "*cette vie, contente et facilement satisfaite . . . se spiritualisait en rêves éthérés,*" in a kind of "mysticisme poétique confondant ciel et la terre." On this theory Christianity becomes very naturally "*une délicieuse pastorale*" ("*Vie de Jésus,*" p. 67).

But it is important to remember that this "delicious pastoral" has proved itself anything but "harmless," if it be "only" a "pastoral."

As regards "the theory of development, or afterthought, it may be said that all the early records, the writings of the apostles and . . . apostolic fathers, are clear about the Godhead of Christ. It was comparatively late that doubters arose . . . like Corinthus and Theodotus, and philosophic Christians like Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, accepting the gospel indeed, but diluting it by their reasonings upon it."—Bishop of Ely ("*Modern Skepticism,*" p. 420, Note).

‡ "*Emile,*" Liv. 4. Cf. Dr. Thomson's remarks: "If in-

21. For I cannot, within my present limits, attempt to show how hopelessly this theory breaks down at every point: how entirely it fails to account for the certain facts of early Christianity, as well as for the lives of the disciples themselves, and other facts connected with the life of our Lord. The whole bearings of the question have been discussed by many able exponents of Christian truth;* and I can only ex-
 deed [Christ] be, as Geiger and others tell us, but a disciple of Hillel, following exactly in his master's footsteps, let us see this Hillel brought forth that we may admire another also divine! Every one knows, and Delitzsch has taken the trouble to show, that there is no comparison possible. The two genealogies may be difficult; the taxing of Cyrenius a perpetual problem; the day of the last Passover may exercise critics to the end; but do or do not the four Gospels conduct us into the presence of the same Jesus? This is the real issue. The Church has long since settled her conviction on this point. . . . And if the life and character of Jesus transcend the power of man's invention, . . . if the hand is not human that drew it, then it must be something more than human." ("Word, Work, and Will," pp. 112, sqq.).

* For a lucid and popular survey of the "Mythical Theories of Christianity," see Rev. C. Row's lecture on that subject, in "Modern Skepticism" (Christian Evidence Society: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872), pp. 307, sqq.

The same author has discussed the mythical explanations referred to at greater length in his "Jesus of the Evangelists," especially ch. 14, pp. 193-216, and Introduction, pp. 4., sqq. (2nd edit., 1880). Cf. a criticism of the views of Strauss and Renan, by T. Colani, at pp. 163, sqq., of his "*Jésus Christ et les Croyances Messianiques de son Temps.*" And see Dean Milman's Appendix to Bk. I., chap. 2, of his "History of Christianity" (vol. I., pp. 109, sqq.), on the "Recent Lives of Christ,"

press my own conscientious inability to find any *consistent* explanation of the personal claims of Christ in any other creed than that of the Christian Church.

22. With respect to Buddha, M. St. Hilaire distinctly states that Sakya Mouni "remains a *man*, and never claims to pass the limits of humanity. . . . Neither his own pride nor the fanaticism of his followers ever conceived the sacrilege of deification."* Examine his life and

by Dr. Strauss and Dr. Weisse. Dörner's great work on the "Doctrine of the Person of Christ" contains, among much else that naturally bears upon the topics of these lectures, a valuable appendix on the controversies of English thinkers on the Person of Christ since the publication of Bishop Bull's "Defensio" in 1685 (Div. II., vol. 3, pp. 340, sqq.).

* "Le Bouddha," p. 168. Cf. authorities cited by Farrar, "Witness of History to Christ," App. C., pp. 203, 204, and Milman, "History of Christianity," I., 94, etc. "Le Bouddhisme est nécessairement athée Il n'y a pas dans tout le Bouddhisme trace d'une idée de Dieu. Cette grande notion, de quelque côté qu'on la prenne, lui a complètement échappé . . . Eh bien ! voilà une grande doctrine . . . un système de philosophie, . . . une religion acceptée et pratiquée par des nations innombrables, . . . ou cette notion [de Dieu] . . . n'apparaît pas, même dans sa nuance la plus effacée . . . Mais ce qui doit surprendre à bon droit, et ce qui n'est pas moins bizarre que tout le reste, c'est que le Bouddhisme n'ait pas divinisé le Bouddha . . . Le Bouddha reste homme, et ne cherche jamais à dépasser les limites de l'humanité . . . L'enthousiasme de ses disciples a été aussi réservé que lui-même : dans le culte innocent qu'ils lui rendaient, leur ferveur s'adressait à un souvenir consolateur et

test it with the touchstone of minute historical criticism, and its thorough *naturalism* will become more and more apparent;* and still more is this the case with the religions of Confucius,

fortifiant," etc ("Le Bouddha et sa Religion," pp. 164, 168, etc.), Cf. Max Müller, "Lectures on the Science of Religion," *passim*, and especially pp. 27, sqq.

* "Siddartha (called Sakya Mouni, that is, monk of the royal race of the Sakyas) whose tender and noble spirit was driven by the contemplation of human misery into desperate struggles to escape from this prison of the universe even at the cost of personal annihilation, . . . did not even profess to support his strange gospel of despair by assertions or attestations which would necessarily imply the personality of God."—Canon Cook, in "Modern Skepticism," p. 466.

"The story of Buddha proves, indeed, that a teacher may easily be transformed into a quasi-god by a creed which has no true theism, much less a rigid monotheism, to protect it. But it also proves that in the process every trace of the real life will be distorted and debased. It proves the impossibility of adding an enormous legendary structure to the temple of history without confusing the original lines and marring the original architecture . . . The true story of the Buddha and the myths laugh each other out of countenance. The miracles of Jesus are in exact and wonderful agreement with his life and teaching" (Dr. Chadwick, "Christ bearing Witness to Himself," p. 139). How entirely this is confirmed by Mr. Edwin Arnold's poem, "The Light of Asia," has already been noticed (see above, Lect. V. sect. 29, note ‡). For a recent opinion of Mr. Rhys Davids, as to alleged "obligations of the New Testament to Buddhism," see vol. XI. of "Sacred Books of the East," edited by Max Müller (Buddhist Sutras), pp. 165, 166, and compare Prof. Legge's "The Religions of China compared with Christianity," lect. 4., pp. 239-310. So Dr. Dods, "Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ," lect. 4., pp. 187 to end.

Zoroaster, or Mohammed. But that the Christ is something wholly different from these is proved, if by nothing else, by the rival theories that have been aimed against his person, but which have fallen, mutually shattered by their own illogical violence, beneath the unassailable armor of his divinity.*

* "The explanations (framed in modern theories of the Gospels) only seem to make the difficulties greater. That the apostles, consciously or unconsciously, invented the character of Jesus and his life, and then persuaded a man like St. Paul to stake his life, to unsay all his former beliefs, to compass sea and land to preach the gospel, upon the faith of this life and character, which were, according to Strauss and others, no more real than the character of Hamlet, is not credible. St. Paul lived at the time of these events, and was full of prejudice against the innovation of Christianity; and yet it is supposed that the growth of many Gospels . . . took place under his very eyes, and that out of the very slenderest historical basis the living Christ was evolved, to be the wonder and the love of all succeeding ages; and yet that St. Paul could not discover this either by his own religious tact or by ordinary inquiry; that he preached the resurrection of a Christ not risen and the divine Sonship of a Galilean artisan and the eternal consequences of a revelation which . . . would be found to be hatched out of the accumulated dreams of a little fanatical sect. This satisfied Strauss; and another theory, equally unsubstantial, satisfied Baur; but each has its own difficulties, and we must be pardoned for thinking the old account the simplest and the best." "Word, Work, and Will," p. 115.

"Who does not know the history of the defeat of skeptical school after skeptical school on the rationalistic side? . . . The naturalistic theory was swallowed by the mythical theory, and the mythical by the tendency theory, and the tendency by the legendary theory. Strauss laughs at Paulus, Baur at

23. I have not touched upon any other of the great lines of Christian history that converge irresistibly to the same undeniable conclusion. I have left untouched the argument to be derived from the adoration of his person in the Pauline Epistles* and in the remaining books of the New Testament; I have not shown you how the Old Testament predictions imply the same momentous truth; I have not asked you to see how the facts of modern history are but a chaos, a labyrinth of despair, if a divine Christ be not the clew to it; I have not asked you to consider the enormous moral presumption in favor of Strauss, Renan at Baur, the hour-glass at all. 'Under his guidance, says Strauss of Paulus ('New Life of Jesus,' p. 18), 'we tumble into the mire.' . . . 'Up to the present day,' says Baur of Strauss ('Kritik. Unters. über die Canonische Evangel.,' 121:40-71), 'the mythical theory has been rejected by every man of education.' . . . 'Insufficient,' says Renan of Baur ('Etude d'hist. Rel.,' 163), 'is what he leaves existing of the Gospels to account for the faith of the apostles.'"—Joseph Cook, "Boston Lectures," "Transcendentalism," p. 32.

For a general survey of the history of skepticism, see Rev. Adam Farrar's "Bampton Lectures" for 1862, "A Critical History of Free Thought in Reference to the Christian Religion." Cf. Dorner's "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," *passim*; and especially div. II., vol. 3, pp. 100 to end. Plumptre, "Boyle Lectures" ("Christ and Christendom"), Appendix B. "On Recent Lives of Jesus," pp. 328-344. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ," Lect. 2, pp. 47-89.

* Cf. the "Boyle Lectures" for 1869 (Stanley Leathes), on "The Witness of St. Paul to Christ." Liddon, "Bampton Lectures," pp. 302, sqq.

this truth that is supplied by the universal reception of the Trinitarian Creed in every true branch of the Church Catholic for eighteen hundred years;* I have not reminded you of the spiritual dominion exercised by our Lord Jesus Christ over the hearts and lives of millions, as well in the heyday of health as in the hour of darkness and of death;† I have not even summarized the arguments which each of these and other lines of treatment suggest as bearing directly upon this the central truth of our faith; but I have asked you simply to look at the claims of Christ himself—the Christ of history—to look at him with candor but with reverence, to look at him “with open eyes,” but with the unaffected humility which the issue before us demands. Whatever imperfections have marred the symmetry of the great dilemma here depicted, I may hope that they have yet not been such as to obscure altogether the true issues that it involves.

24. I have to ask your indulgence for the demands that I have so continuously made upon

* Cf. Liddon's seventh “Bampton Lecture;” and for a close and learned historical review of the facts here referred to, see Dorner's work on “The History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ,” English transl. (T. T. Clark), *passim*.

† Cf. Chalmers' “Works,” vol. IV., pp. 48–91. Andrew Fuller's “The Gospel its own Witness,” etc. Boyd Carpenter's “Hulsean Lectures” for 1878. “The Witness of the Heart to Christ,” S. P. C. K., etc.

your patience and attention ; and I can only trust that the interest of some may have been more effectually aroused than hitherto in what has rightly been described by a thoughtful lay writer as "the greatest problem of human history, . . . the greatest question that can task human thought."* It has been my endeavor to exhibit the necessity for knowledge, in lieu of mere pietism, as the essential groundwork of an intelligent faith ; to lay before you the true tendencies of a flippant rationalism ; to make clear the peril of too rashly tampering with the objective personality of Christ, the Son of the living God ; and if, in days when the cruel sneer of an arrogant skepticism is often veiled beneath the mask of science, I may have been permitted to remind you that skepticism can claim no monopoly of honesty or of intellectual aptitude, any more than agnosticism can claim the monopoly of a true science or philosophy ; if amid the restlessness resulting from a too fashionable habit of "honest doubt," any words of mine, or of others better qualified to speak on such a subject than myself, have served in any degree to intensify the faith of even a single listener, and to show how deep and true are the reverence and gratitude of at least one "orthodox" thinker, in view of what he certainly believes to be the "theological"

* R. H. Hutton, "Theological Essays," vol. I., p. 263.

work which is being done by the high-priests of contemporary science: then the hours that have been spent upon the problem here unworthily discussed will not, perhaps, be wholly lost.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

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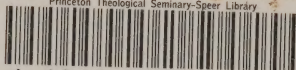
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